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A

# VIEW

OF THE

# *ECONOMY*

OF THE

# CHURCH OF GOD,

AS IT EXISTED PRIMITIVELY,

UNDER THE

ABRAHAMIC DISPENSATION

AND THE

SINAI LAW;

AND AS IT IS PERPETUATED UNDER THE MORE LUMINOUS

DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL;

PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO THE

COVENANTS.

By SAMUEL AUSTIN, A. M.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

"HIS KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM."

"AMICUS SOCRATES, AMICUS PLATO, SED MAJOR AMICA VERITAS."

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# INTRODUCTION.

*SEVERAL works have been published within a few years, both in Europe, and in this Country, concerning the Church of God; particularly, the qualifications which are requisite for membership in it, its institutions, the persons to whom they ought to be extended, and the discipline which its officers, and ordinary members are to maintain in it. The Baptist controversy, in which all these subjects are more or less involved, has been lately revived. Books are multiplied, without bringing this controversy to a close. Difficulties still remain, to perplex the humble enquirer, and keep up the vehemence of debate. Much truth is exhibited. But a clear, consistent scheme, disembarrassed of real difficulties, seems to be wanting. Such a scheme the Bible undoubtedly contains. To elicit this scheme is the only way to bring honest minds to an agreement. Whoever will candidly review the most ingenious Treatises which have been published in the Baptist controversy, will perceive that the Pædobaptists have a great preponderance of evidence on their side of the question. It will, at the same time, be perceived, that they are not as united as could be wished in the principles of their theory. Some rest the evidence that the infant seed of believers are proper subjects of baptism, almost wholly upon the covenant which God established with Abraham. Others have not so much respect to this kind of argument; but prefer to rest the defence of their opinion, and practice, upon what they apprehend to be the clearer intimations of the Gospel, and upon the records of history. Different views are entertained of the nature of the Abrahamic covenant. It is debated whether this covenant was strictly, and properly the covenant of Grace; what was the real import, and who were the objects of its promises. Different opinions are entertained, and contrary*

*hypotheses advocated also, respecting the Sinai covenant, the dispensation by Moses generally, and the constitution and character of the community of Israel. Some very respectable and learned divines among the Pædobaptists have adopted the idea, that this community was of a mixed character, and have called it a Theocracy. Among the many advocates of this opinion are Lowman, Doddridge, Warburton, Guise, and the late John Erskine. These Divines supposed, that the legation of Moses could be best defended against the cavils of unbelievers, by placing God at the head of the community of Israel, as a civil governor, surrounding himself with the regalia, and managing his subjects with the penalties and largesses, of a temporal sovereign.*

*The Antipædobaptists have found this hypothesis so convenient a refuge from the attacks of their opposers, as to incorporate it, with great affection, and as a radical principle, into their system of reasoning. They have gone farther, and entirely accommodated the hypothesis to their peculiar notions. They insist, that this community was not, either in fact, or in the original plan of the institution, spiritual, and religious; but civil and carnal; and that, of course, the christian church is specifically different, and an entirely new society.*

*It is the opinion of the Author of the following Treatise, that this hypothesis has been adopted unwarily; and not only without, but against evidence.*

*In view of this diversity of sentiment, and the obscurity which seems yet to lie over these subjects, it was his opinion, that a distinct and accurate view, if one could be given, of the Hebrew economy, as established by Jehovah, from its rise in the call of Abraham, and the covenant entered into with him, to its consummation in the Christian Church; deduced, not from the fallible theories of men, but from the Bible itself, was a great desideratum in the science of theology. Such a view he has attempted to furnish. Of his success the public must judge. Though he cannot but entertain the hope that he has succeeded, as to the main principles, he would be adventurous indeed to avow a confidence, that his work is with-*

*out error. Circumstantial errors however, whether they respect the matter or the manner, the reader is requested to remember, will not invalidate the truth of the leading principles. If these principles can be shewn to be wrong, the writer will be constrained to confess he has altogether failed of his object.*

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*The reader is referred to the* Poſtſcript *for ſeveral explanations ſuggeſted by a review of the ſheets, after they came from the preſs.*

On a review of this work, ſeveral typographical errors are diſcovered. The greater number are to be found in the forepart of the book. Here alſo the punctuation is moſt incorrect. So far as the accuracy of the Author ſeems to be implicated, he has an apology in an indiſpoſition, of which he was ſubject while this part of the book was paſſing through the preſs.

The errors which the reader is requeſted to correct are theſe.

In page 21 For *Pſalms*, in three inſtances, read *Pſalm*.
44 Sixth line from bottom, for *convenant* read *covenant*.
46 Bottom line in the note, for *appears* read *appear*.
58 [illegible]h from bottom, for *kindred* read *kindreds*.
71 Second from top, for *exſluſion* read *excluſion*.
95 Eleventh from bottom, for *pachal* read *paſchal*.
143 Top line, for *diſobience* read *diſobedience*.
150 The top line of firſt note, for *tautologus* rend *tautologous*, and in the ſecond line below, for *interpratations* read *interpretations*.
160 Sixth line from bottom, for *dsys* read *days*.
173 Sixteenth from bottom, for *ſucceeſſive* read *ſucceſſive*.
175 In two inſtances, for *Iſreal* read *Iſrael*.
220 Here are two omiſſions near the bottom, *his*, and *ed*, which the reader will ſupply.

## CHAPTER I.

*Respecting the different significations of the word Covenant, as it is used in the scripture.*

As we professedly design to examine the covenant of circumcision, as the constitutional basis of the Hebrew community, and shall have occasion to consider wherein it differs from other covenants with which it stands connected; it may aid us in our enquiries and guard us from error, to notice, in the first place, the different significations of the term *covenant*, as it is used in the holy scripture.

1. The word *covenant* is used in many parts of the scripture to express an *absolute* or *unconditional promise*. It is evidently used in this sense, in the 9th chap. of Gen. 8th verse, and onward. "And God spake unto Noah and his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, of every beast of the earth, and I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, this is the token of the covenant, which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth.—And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and all flesh, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." Here is no condition.—The engagement respects the irrational animals, as well as human beings, and is therefore absolute. No impiety on the part of man can make the engagement void.

The word *covenant* has evidently the same signification in the promise which God makes to David, as expressed in the 89th Psalm, from the 20th verse, and onward. This passage, because it not only confirms the idea, that the word *covenant* sometimes means an unconditional promise, but reflects light on our main subject, I shall quote at large. "I have found David my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him.—With whom my hand *shall be established;* mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy also shall not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep with him forever more, and my *covenant* shall forever stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law; and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My *covenant* will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips. Once have sworne by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Here are several promises wrought into this covenant. They had an ultimate respect to the Messiah, the root and the offspring of David; his Lord and heir; God's first born. They are of the same tenor, and are, as is plain from the terms in which they are expressed, and from the nature of the purpose which they reveal, absolute. David indeed complains, in the following verses, as though they were made void; but

this complaint has respect to present contrary appearances only, and is corrected at the close of the Psalm. "Blessed be the Lord, forever more, Amen & Amen."

This covenant, though equally absolute with that addressed to Noah, differs from it in this respect, that it involves personal allegiance on the part of David, and his seed. This was not a contingence upon which the covenant was suspended; but essential to the execution, and secured by the terms of it. This distinction, between some absolute promises and others, the reader is desired to keep in remembrance; for it will be of use in ascertaining the divine economy in regard to the Church.

2. The word covenant is sometimes used in the scripture to signify *law*. In Deuteronomy iv. 13. the ten commandments are expressly called God's covenant. "And he declared to you his covenant *to perform*, even *ten commandments*, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." The ark, because it contained these two tables of the law, was called, "the ark of the covenant." The word *law*, it is true, is sometimes used in a large sense, as intending the whole of the Pentateuch; and then it comprehends the sacrifices, the purifications and festivals, with their special design, the history of facts, and the promises, wrought into the dispensation by Moses. In this sense the word *law* appears to have been generally used by the Jewish Rabbis. And in this sense it is used by our Lord, when he says, Luke xxiv. 44th, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you; that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in *the law of Moses*, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me." But we see from the quotation just made, that the word *covenant* is used to signify *the law*, in the strictest sense; as a mere rule of obedience.*

3. The term covenant is applied, Exodus xxxi. 26 to the *Sabbath*. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall

* This use of the term *covenant* is by no means peculiar to the scripture. The Pythagorian and Orphic schools among the Greeks, gave this name to their precepts. "Et pro legibus apud Orphicos et Pythagoristas; nam hi, præscriptas suo gregi vivendi normas, διαθηκας, vocabant.
*Poli Prolegomena in Mattheum.*

keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual *covenant.*"

It is not perhaps necessary to stay here to enquire in what sense the sabbath is a covenant. It may be just observed, that it seems to be a covenant in the same sense that circumcision is called a covenant; i. e. as a standing token in Israel, that Jehovah was their God. This is the view given of it by God himself. Ezekiel, xx. 12, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a *sign* between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them."

4. In Exodus, xxxiv. 10, the word *covenant* is used to express *the triumphs of divine power over the enemies of Israel*, in which God signally appeared in their behalf as their God. "And he said, Behold I make a *covenant;* before all thy people will I do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people amongst whom thou art, shall see the work of the Lord; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day. Behold I drive out before thee, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebuzite." These triumphs of God over the enemies of Israel, were another token, or testimony, that they were his people, and that he was their God.

5. *Our Lord Jesus Christ* is called a covenant. Isaiah, xlii. 6, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee *for a covenant* of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." That this passage relates to Christ, is evident from the application which the Evangelists make to him of the verses with which it is connected. He is a covenant, as he is the leading subject of promise, and the sum of the blessing bestowed upon sinners.

6. The word *covenant* is used in Job, xxxi. 1, for *a pious resolution.* "I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"

7. The word is used to signify *the established order in which the planetary system revolves.* Jeremiah xxxiii.

20, " Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night; and that there shall not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, &c." That the word covenant here does not look back directly to the promise made to Noah; but rather respects the continuity of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; which, however, is partly in fulfilment of that promise, is, I think, evident from a corresponding passage in the 31st chapter, 35th verse. " Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation *before me* forever."

8. The word covenant sometimes signifies in the scripture, as it does more generally, when applied to the transactions of men with each other, *an agreement which is mutual.* The word under this meaning is applied to the compact which was entered into between Israel and the Gibeonites. This compact consisted of mutual engagements. In our English version it is indeed called a league. But in the Seventy the same word is used, which is generally rendered covenant. The word covenant, as importing mutual agreement, is applied to the contract of marriage, Malachi ii. 14, " Yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." In marriage there are always mutual engagements.

9. The word covenant is used to signify a conditional promise on the part of God, to secure the felicity of men, upon their appropriating him, and maintaining their allegiance to him, as their God. In this sense it is evidently used in Deuteronomy, v. 2, 3, " The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.— The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." This covenant is here expressly distinguished from pre-

vious covenant transactions with the Patriarchs. It is found in the 19th chapter of Exodus, 5 and 6 verses; and, as there laid down, is undeniably a conditional promise. "Now therefore, *if* ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, *then* ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

Law was involved in this covenant, as will be seen hereafter. Still, it is evident the word covenant has respect here, at least in part, to promise. And this promise is conditional.

10. The word covenant is used to signify the sanctification of the heart by the special influences of the Holy Spirit, involving a cordial acceptance of the overtures of grace on the part of him who is a subject of this sanctification. A passage in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah presents this idea of covenant. "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. But this shall be the covenant which I shall make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" This covenant is mentioned again in the 40th verse of the next chapter. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; *but I will put my fear in their hearts and they shall not depart from me.*" It is to be observed, that the promise of God is one thing, and the event, which he engages to bring to pass, is another. It is the latter which is here called a new covenant. It consists in the actual renovation of the hearts of the people of Israel and Judah; and in God's becoming spiritually and unalterably united to them as their God. This covenant was made with the house of Judah on

their return from the Babylonian captivity; and again under the ministry, and after the ascension of Jesus Christ; but will be made, in a far more extensive and glorious manner, and, in complete fulfilment of the promise, at some future period.

Here then we have ten distinct senses in which the word *covenant* is used in the Bible, without adverting to the nature of the covenant of circumcision. If the word has so many distinct meanings in the scripture, it must be hazardous to assume any particular definition of covenant, as applying in all cases, or even generally. Nor is it safe to say, that it is *here* to be taken *literally*, and *there figuratively*. It is not certain that it is once used in a figurative sense either in the Old Testament or the New. Like many words in all langnages, it has a large and inappropriate signification. The idea which it is designed to convey, in any particular place, is to be ascertained, from the subject to which it is applied, and the transactions which it expresses. Some of these distinctions respecting the meaning of this word will come into view, and appear to have their use, as we progress in our enquires.

## CHAPTER II.

*Respecting the identity of what are commonly called, the Covenant of Redemption, and the Covenant of Grace.*

IN the most approved systems of Divinity, the word *covenant* is often used to express an agreement which is supposed to have taken place in eternity, between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in regard to the redemption of the Church. This supposed agreement is hence called *the covenant of redemption.* The word is used also to express the promise made by God to every believer, that he will ultimately bestow upon him the blessedness of heaven. This blessedness is promised and conferred wholly of grace. Hence the promise is called *the covenant of grace.* Neither of these phrases, the Covenant of Redemption or the Covenant of Grace, are to be found in the scripture. There are however those covenant tranactions which they are meant to designate.

That we may fix the covenant of circumcision in its place in the economy of God, and have correct views of the nature of its promises, it is necessary that we should settle the question, if we can, whether there is any foundation in the scripture for this distinction; or whether these covenants are two; or are only distinct modifications of one and the same covenant. Writers have different opinions on this question. Some contend for two covenants, numerically distinct from each other. Others insist that there is but one.* The

* "The distinction between a covenant of Grace, and a covenant of Redemption is without any foundation in the word of God." Gill's reply to Clark, page 10. "The covenant of Redemption subsists between the three persons of the Trinity, and was eternal. But the covenant of Grace was between God and fallen man, and none are brought into this covenant unless they do, in some way assent to its conditions." Cowles, on the identity of the Jewish and Christian Church, page 7th. "There is only one covenant of God's making, the covenant of Grace and Redemption, for the eternal salvation of mankind sinners. The scripture reveals but one for that purpose, the new covenant, the everlasting covenant." Gib's Sacred Contemplations, page 142.

covenant of Redemption, by all who admit the thing, is allowed to be brought into view in Isaiah, liii. chapter, 10, 11, and 12 verses. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." This is understood to be a promise on the part of God the Father to the Son. The ground of this promise was, the Son's making his soul an *offering for sin.* This event was as certain as the purposes of God are unalterable, and unfrustrable. The promise therefore, was suspended upon no contingence, and must take effect. It engaged a seed, and the salvation of that seed; so that they must all infallibly be saved. Accordingly our Savior observes, John vi. 37, "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

What is called the covenant of grace, is brought into view, in all the promises which are addressed by God to believers generally. An example we have in this promise, Hebrews xiii. 6, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

The question now is, whether the term *covenant* may not apply to these two cases of promise, without a numerical, and with only a modal distinction.

Let it be here remarked, that God's promise of eternal life to men, assumes different attitudes, under different circumstances. It is sometimes addressed to men *conditionally*, as a *mere proposal.* Thus it is presented in the 55th chapter of Isaiah, first verse. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat, yea, come,

buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Here God proposes a covenant to men, which is certainly a gracious covenant; for it comprehends the sure mercies of David, or the blessing of eternal life. The promise is conditional. *If* they will incline their ear and hear, their soul shall live. But sometimes this promise becomes a matter of *mutual agreement.* After having been proposed, as it must ever be in order to be an object of personal faith; it has an application; or is carried into effect, by virtue of the consent of him to whom it is proposed. In the former case it secures no blessing. In the latter it secures all blessings. For the promise as conditional might be made to mankind universally; and be as universally disagreed to. No effect would then follow but their heavier condemnation. But no man can embrace the promise and fail of salvation.* Here is a very important modal difference, yet the promise is numerically the same.—Perhaps the distinction between the covenant of Redemption, and what is called the covenant of Grace is analogous to this; not that they are two, but the same covenant under different *modifications;* first, in the form of an absolute promise, made by the Father to the Son; then revealed and proposed to men; and then applied and carried into effect, in the persons of those who consent to it. If this should appear to be the case, it will be coincident with, and therefore confirmed by, the innumerable examples in which the word covenant, when it respects the great work of redeeming grace, is used in the singular. It is scarce ever used in the plural.

* All the conditional or hypothetical promises recorded in the Bible, are, I conceive, the covenant of Grace or Redemption, call it which you will, presentsd in this form of a proposal. And all the absolute promises are this covenant applied or carried into effect with respect to the elect. In the latter case the promises are *yea and amen.*

As the covenant state of all the elect is the same, except that some have actually embraced the covenant, and some have not, let us, to ascertain and settle this matter conclusively, have our eye upon an individual, say B. Suppose then that God the Father, promised the Son, that B should be one of his seed, and adorn his triumphs.*

The nature, time, and manner, of the salvation of B, are to be understood as comprehended in the promise, which we suppose to be made respecting him: viz. that salvation should be proposed to him; that he should be influenced to embrace this proposal; be made a subject of the indwelling of the Spirit; and in consequence inherit eternal life. The promise depended upon no contingence, and could not fail. Thus B. was "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, *that he should be holy and without blame before God in love.* He was predestinated to the adoption of a child." The promise in this case, which is of the nature of choice and predestination to life, is what is intended by the Covenant of Redemption. It is evident that this promise completely interested B in the blessings of the covenant. No posterior circumstance could interest him more perfectly. All that should follow, in relation to his salvation, would be but the execution of this promise.

In the course of events B exists, as a revolted and guilty creature. At the time, and in the manner fixed on, it is revealed to him, that God means to save a part of that revolted race to which he belongs. He is not now told that *he* is one designated. But he is told that Christ has laid down his life for the sheep; that salvation through him is tendered to men indiscriminately; that the door of mercy is open, and he may enter

* The justness of applying the promise of the covenant of redemption to an individual will surely not be contested. For it has a full warrant in these words of our Savior, John, vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me." This passage undeniably teaches that individual sinners were given to Christ. For *all* is composed of individuals. And these individuals were those and those only, whom Christ undertook to bring to himself. This was to be done to be sure in a certain way. Still the promise, both on the part of the Father and and of the Son, respected individuals, and the same individuals.

if he pleases. God assures him that he will be *his* God, or which is the same thing, that he shall be found among those on whom he intends to bestow eternal blessedness, *if* he will be reconciled. Here is a covenant presented hypothetically, or in the form of a proposal. B, influenced by the renewing action of the Holy Spirit upon his soul, penitently, and gratefully, accepts the good news, and avouches Jehovah for his God. Here the covenant is established, or becomes a *matter of mutual agreement* with B.

Now, if we review this process, it will appear, that the covenant *proposed*, is nothing more nor less than the Covenant of Redemption revealed and addressed to B. For it simply unfolds the promises of this covenant, involving the principle upon which they were made, and the manner in which it was agreed that they should be carried into effect, viz. by the preaching of it, and the application of it by the Holy Ghost. The covenant which takes effect, as a matter of mutual agreement between God and B, is nothing more nor less than the Covenant of Redemption, executed with respect to B. B's salvation is now no more secure, and he is no more interested in the covenant favor of God than he was before he believed. There is indeed an alteration, with respect to his *actual* relative condition. In respect to his unbelieving state, he *was* under the curse; *now* he *is* under the blessing. He before refused. Now his consent is given. But his consent was comprehended in, and secured by the promise of the covenant. Consent is a blessing of the covenant, and in it the work of salvation begins. It is the promise of God then entirely, not the consent of B, which interests him in the blessing. So that the covenants which are such as a matter of *proposal, and agreement*, are the covenant of redemption, *published, and executed*. But neither the publication, nor execution of a promise, forms numerically another promise. So far therefore as the term covenant is applied to either in a distinct sense, it can only mark a new modification in which the covenant of Redemption is placed.

It will appear in the progress of this work, that there is an exact similarity between the promises of the covenant made with Abraham and those of the covenant of Redemption. We cannot anticipate the analysis of the former which is to be given. But so much may be here observed. There was a seed of some sort, with which God promised Abraham that he would establish his covenant, so as to be their God. Supposing this promise to be absolute, which will be proved; it was just like the promise made by God the Father to the Son. The promise to the Son, was; that he would give him a seed; that he would establish his covenant with that seed; and be their God. The promise to Abraham was; that God would give him a seed; that he would establish his covenant with that seed; and be their God. Let us now suppose, that Moses was one of the seed of Abraham promised to him, and respected in the covenant made with him, as he undoubtedly was. The promise then secured, that Moses should exist, that he should embrace the covenant, and walk in it; and that God would be his God. Moses exists, and at a particular moment actually embraces the covenant. But a numerically distinct covenant is not now established with Moses. If this were true, there would be as many covenants as there are believers. No, it is *the covenant* of Abraham, which is now, in fulfilment of the promise of it, established with Moses. It is this identical covenant *applied* and *executed* with respect to *him*. Moses and Abraham are in the *same* covenant. This illustrates and confirms the identity of the covenants of Redemption and Grace. Hence the word covenant, when it is used with respect to the blessing, is so universally in the singular. It may be useful to refer to a few passages. Psalms, xxv. 14, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them *his covenant.*" Psalms, lxxiv. 20, "Have respect unto the *covenant.*" Psalms, cxi. 5, "He hath given meat unto them that fear him, he will be ever mindful of his *covenant.*" Isaiah, lvi. 4, "For thus saith the Lord

unto the Eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of *my covenant.*" Hosea, vi. 7, "But they like men have transgressed the *covenant.*" Malachi, iii. 1, "Even the messenger of the *covenant.*" Acts, iii. 25, "Ye are the children of the *covenant.*" Hebrews, ix. 15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the *New Testament*, or covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first testament, they which are called might recive the promise of eternal inheritance." Surely this language, which runs through the scripture, from beginning to end, is against the idea, that God has two or more distinct gracious covenants respecting his redeemed people, securing their salvation. Nor, as Dr. Gill correctly observes, is there one word in scripture in favor of such a distinction.*

We shall go upon the principle then, that the covenant, meaning by covenant, that which is equivalent with efficient *promise* (for the term, as it means *law, token*, &c. is here out of the question) is *one*, and shall call it God's gracious covenant.

This one covenant is the substance of that revelation which God has given to us in the Holy Scriptures. The historic and prophetic parts of the scripture are to be viewed as illustrating the manner in which God executes the promises of this covenant. The devotional parts chiefly consist in celebrating the omnipotence, the wisdom, the faithfulness and grace with which it is carried into effect. All the assurances which are there addressed to individuals, or the church at large; all the benedictions pronounced; all the tender names God is pleased to assume and the condescending manner in which he is pleased to declare, that he unites himself to saints as their God; are so many illustrations of the plenitude of grace which it contains. The law is a schoolmaster to lead us to him who is the mediator of it. The blood of Christ is the blood of this

* But the Dr. did not perceive how this idea militates entirely with the view he has given us, and which is given us in the writings of Baptists generally, of the Abrahamic covenant, of the nature of the Hebrew community, and of exclusive adult membership and baptism. How it does will be seen in the sequel.

covenant solemnly sealing it. " For," Matthew, xxvi. 28, " this is my blood of the New Testament."

This one covenant is the flourishing stock on which every promise to man grows, whether absolute or conditional, relative to one dispensation or another, to time or to eternity. On the basis of this covenant it is proper for God to make any promise that he sees fit, to families or to individuals. Hence we find in fact, particular promises made to one person, which are not made to another. Some promises were made to Abraham, which have not been made to any other of the human race. And this is true of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter and Paul. A promise was made to the widow of Sarepta, which was made to no other human being. Some of these promises are absolute, some of them conditional. It cannot perhaps be strictly correct to say of one of these particular and appropriate promises, separately considered, that it is *the gracious covenant of God*, or *the covenant of grace*, any more than it can be correct to say of a branch, that it is *the tree*. But as the nature of a branch is determined by the tree on which it grows; so it must be safe and correct to say, that all these particular promises, shooting out from God's gracious covenant, as the parent stock, are exclusively of a gracious nature, and belong to it.

To adopt the beautiful and expressive figure of Paul, Romans, xi. the covenant is an olive tree, (a symbol of peace) planted in a bountiful soil, cultured by the hand of efficacious grace, full of fatness, shooting up to heaven, and spreading into an infinite multitude of branches. The branches are distinguishable from each other; but they all depend upon the tree, and belong to it. They may be perpetually multiplying; yet the tree is but *one*.*

* Herman Witsius, in his Economy of the Covenants, treats the Covenant of of Grace and the Covenant of Redemption as distinguishable. Yet he is constrained to speak of them as essentially the same. His words are, Vol. I. page 382, " If we view the substance of the covenant, it is but only *one*, nor is it possible it should be otherways.—(He means the covenant of grace.) And that Testament which was consecrated by the blood of Christ, he (Paul) calls *everlasting; because it was settled from eternity*, published immediately upon the fall of the first man

**Aided by this extended view of God's gracious covenant, we shall be better able to understand the nature of God's transactions with Abraham. To which therefore we will next proceed.**

constantly handed down by the ancients, more fully explained by Christ himself and his apostles and is to continue throughout all ages; in virtue of which believers shall inherit eternal happiness." Most undoubtedly it is the covenant of Redemption which was fixed in eternity, and in virtue of which believers inherit eternal happiness. In like manner, Dr. Samuel Hopkins says, System, 2d. Vol. page 93, "The Covenant of Grace, when understood in the most extensive sense, comprehends all the designs and transactions respecting the redemption of man by Jesus Christ. In this view, it comprehends the eternal purpose of God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to redeem man, fixing the manner of it, and every thing that relates to it, and entering into a mutual agreement or covenant, in which the part which each person should perform, as distinguished from the other, was fixed and voluntarily undertaken." Here certainly is the covenant of Redemption. Yet, strange to tell! The Dr. attempts to make an entirely distinct thing of the Covenant of Grace. The reason of this confusion is, that it is impossible to give any account of the one, without comprehending the other. Is the Covenant of Grace simply an agreement which subsists between God and the individual believer? Then it had its beginning in time. For the agreement could not exist before the believer himself existed. And then there are as many Covenants of Grace as there are believers. For the agreement which subsists between God and me, is not an agreement which subsists between God and another person. In short, a Covenant of Grace, distinct numerically from the Covenant of Redemption, is an indefinable thing.

## CHAPTER III.

*Respecting the character and relative state of Abraham, prior to God's establishing with him that covenant which has been commonly styled the covenant of circumcision; or prior to that covenant transaction recorded in the 17th chapter of Genesis.*

IT is undeniable that from a period not very remote from the first apostacy, to the calling of Abraham, there were pious persons in the world. Abel, Enoch, and Noah, were eminently of this character.—Others there were who were distinguished from the idolatrous, and irreligious part of mankind, as *the sons of God*. But so little is said respecting their open separation and union, under covenant bonds; or as a collective society; that we can scarcely discern an organized Church during that whole period.

The calling of Abraham was a new epoch in the history of the work of redemption. It was an event which had special respect to the Messiah; and the establishment, increase, and perpetutity, of his kingdom in a compacted state, and before the eyes of the world. Abraham was a person of real piety. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God. He is spoken of in the scriptures, in terms of high commendation, in that light. God testifies of him, Genesis, xviii. 19. "For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord; to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." He is called by way of eminence, "*the friend of God.*" Isaiah, xli. 8. He is spoken of by Jesus Christ, as the Father of the whole body of Israel. John viii. 56. "Your *Father* Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." And the whole

body of believers, from Christ, to the end of the world, are placed in connexion with him, as his children.—All who are of faith are asserted to be children of, and to be blessed with, faithful Abraham. Believing Jews, and believing Gentiles, have one common spiritual relation to him. Galatians iii. 28, 29. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all *one* in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." All inferior distinctions are ultimately lost in the unity of the family state. This family is the Church; the Church, as a collective and associated body, under immediate divine superintendance, and protection. In order then to obtain right ideas of the constitution and duration of the Church of God in this view, we must begin with this illustrious patriarch. We must endeavor to ascertain as accurately as we can, the relation to God in which he stood, and the peculiar nature of those covenant transactions which took place between God and him.

The first thing we hear of importance respecting Abraham is his calling, or his open separation, in obedience to the command of God, from his kindred, and the place of his accustomed habitation. Genesis, xii. 1, "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation. And I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him: And Lot went with him. And Abraham was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abraham took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all the substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

It is evident that Abraham was at this time, a subject of faith. His prompt obedience to the command of God, in the face of so many natural inducements to the contrary, is proof of it. Faith was the principle of this obedience. For the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the 11th chapter and 8th verse of that Epistle, tells us, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out, into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went." He was separated from his father's house, led to Canaan, his future earthly inheritance, a type and pledge of the heavenly, was blessed of God, and designated to be a blessing, as a subject of faith.

The promises attached to this call were comprehensive of all good. They implied an indissoluble and holy relation between God and Abraham; and had evidently in view, the establishment of the Church in the persons of his descendants; the advent of the Messiah, who, according to the flesh, was to proceed from his loins; and, by a series of antecedent and subsequent events, the accomplishment of that great salvation, of which the Messiah is the author, and the finisher. This is evident from the obvious import of these promises; but will be made to appear more clearly in the sequel. This initial proceeding on the part of God, was altogether gracious, and ought to be understood as giving a character to all subsequent transactions with this patriarch, and the events which followed, in regard to the family of which he was now publicly and solemnly constituted head. The promises were certainly of a gracious nature. All promises made by God to creatures who have become obnoxious to punishment by sinning against him, must be of this nature. The law and promise are contrasted. The law worketh wrath. Promise is the language of peace. It holds out a *blessing*. Hence the apostle Paul so carefully distinguishes between law and promise. Galatians iii. 18, "For if the inheritance be of *the law* it is no more of *promise*; but God gave it to Abraham by *promise*." God declares here that he will curse all who curse Abraham.

He is here then, as expressly as possible, recognized as a subject of grace, and all the blessings secured to him are promised upon this ground. These promises are not conditional, but absolute. They are suspended upon no contingence. They are an irrecoverable grant, and must take effect.

Another promise made to Abraham is mentioned in the 7th verse of this chapter. "And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, *unto thy seed will I give this land.*" This promise also, is, for the reasons just mentioned, of a gracious nature, and proves that Abraham was now a subject of special grace.

The promise of a numerous posterity, and of the land of Canaan to be given them for a possession, is renewed to Abraham in the 14, 15, 16, and 17 verses; and, as in the former case, proves his covenant interest in the divine favor. This holy relation Abraham ratifies by building an altar unto the Lord in Hebron, verse 18.

Afterwards we find it openly acknowledged, and confirmed, by the benediction of Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God, who went forth to meet him, as he was returning in triumph from the vale of Siddim. Genesis, xiv, 18, 19. "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." Melchizedek was an extraordinary character. In him, as in the Savior, were united, the offices of prophet, priest, and king. This benediction was prophetical; and the offices of priest and king are expressly assigned to him. His priesthood was altogether distinguishable from the order of Aaron, and superior to it. For the tribe of Levi, which enjoyed the Aaronic priesthood, was in the loins of Abraham, when Melchizedek met him; and as the *less* was blessed of the *better*. Hebrews vii. 6, 7. "But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all controversy, the less is blessed of the better."

He was not probably Christ himself; but was a remarkable type of him. For, Hebrews, vii. 3, "Being made *like unto the Son of God*, he abideth a priest continually." As the contrast of the mortal state of the priests of the Aaronic order, it is "witnessed of him that he liveth," 8th verse. Five times, in this Epistle to the Hebrews, is Jesus mentioned as, "made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

As such a remarkable type of Christ, Melchizedek was commissioned to bear the *blessing* to Abraham.—And as an outward testimonial of it, to which the appointed elements in the Lord's supper are probably conformed, he brought forth bread and wine. In this whole transaction we perceive a wonderful coincidence with the dispensation of the Gospel. Here is in fact a Gospel preacher, an extraordinary representative and forerunner of the adorable Jesus, bringing glad tidings of great joy to the Father of the faithful; which not only respected him, but his immense family. This annunciation of Gospel blessings, at this time, when exhausted by the labors of travel and battle, must have been greatly exhilerating to Abraham. Now, "he rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it and was glad." John viii. 56.

In the conquest he gained over the enemies of God, and the spiritual consolations imparted to him under this benediction, he enjoyed those holy triumphs which fall to the experience of all believers.

In the 15th chapter of this book of Genesis, God again addresses Abraham in language of covenant favor. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not Abraham, for I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." What more gracious declaration was ever made, or can be made, to man than this? Here Abraham is required to dismiss all his solicitude, both with respect to this world, and the next; for that God is his salvation.

The next thing of importance that we find respecting Abraham, is the promise of an heir from his own bowels. This promise he believed, and it was counted to

him for righteousness. The promise of an heir, and the faith with which Abraham embraced it, were considerably anterior to the appointment of circumcision. This is found to be a fact on the face of the history; and is expressly mentioned by the apostle Paul, Romans, iv. 9. "For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, *being yet uncircumcised*, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." It is evident from this passage, as well as from all that has been before adduced, that Abraham was interested in the righteousness of faith, that righteousness which faith secures, long before circumcision was instituted. This righteousness of faith was a righteousness which Abraham found. For the assertion of the apostle just quoted from the 4th of Romans, is made in reply to the question put in the first verse of the chapter. "What shall we say then that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" It is a righteousness entirely distinct from faith itself. It is a righteousness imputed to all who believe. It is a righteousness without works, verse 6th. It is the nonimputation of sin, and the blessedness which the full pardon of it involves, verse 8th. It is comprehensively the blessing with which God blessed Abraham, and which was the specific reward of his faith. It is the very blessing which has come on the Gentiles through faith. It cannot be otherways; because faith is ever a fruit of the same spirit; is of the same nature; respects the same object, *the promise;* is ever contrasted to the same things, law and works; is ever the principle of life; for "the just shall live by his faith;" and is ever crowned with the same victory; for "this is the victory, which overcometh the world, even our faith."

It may be worth while to remark here, that, as circumcision is expressly declared by the apostle to be a

seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised, that is, long before circumcision was instituted, it sealed a promise which was made long before the transactions recorded in the 17th of Genesis; and as circumcision is also declared to be a token of the covenant, spoken of in this 17th chapter, established by God with Abraham and his seed; it is undeniable, that this covenant, called the covenant of circumcision, and the anterior promise, are substantially the same. Circumcision is certainly not a *seal* of one thing, and a *token* of another. Or if it should be contended, that *seal* and *token* are not of exactly equivalent import, yet, circumcision had respect to the first transaction as well as to the last, and to nothing but promise.*

On the whole it seems undeniable that Abraham was respected altogether as a saint; that God was his God, upon this ground; that he was in covenant with God years before circumcision was instituted; that the relation, which subsisted between God and him, was altogether spiritual; that the blessings promised were wholly by grace; that they were embraced by faith; and therefore, that all the transactions of God with him,

* It is a pitiful explanation which is given by some writers of this righteousness of faith, which is mentioned here, and in many other places of the scripture; that it means the reality, or the morally right nature of Abraham's faith; and therefore has no respect to the object of faith, or the faith of any other person.—"That which St. Paul meant, by calling circumcision the seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith is simply this, that the alacrity, promptitude and cheerfulness, with which he received and obeyed this self denying duty, was a seal, token, or confirming evidence, of the *sincerity of his faith.*" Andrews's Vindication, page 39. According to this construction, the whole design of circumcision, in all the innumerable cases in which it has been practiced, was to assure Abraham and the world, that his faith was not insincere, but sincere faith; or true faith in opposition to that which is mere pretence. But the sincerity of Abraham's faith wanted no such confirmation. The attestation of God who knew his heart; and his own works, furnished such proof of this, as rendered every other evidence altogether superfluous. James tells us how Abraham's faith was justified, or proved to be genuine. It was not by circumcision, but by his works. James ii. 22, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect?*" The sealing respected nothing done by man.—It respected the promise of God, with the blessing which it secured. Man cannot seal his own actions. He is a mere recipient of the blessing. The righteousness of faith was not peculiar to Abraham. It was enjoyed by his progenitor Noah. Hebrews xi 7. "By faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir *of the righteousness* which is by faith." See an ingenious illustration of the righteousness of faith, by Edward Williams, D. D. in his work entitled, Antipœdobaptism Examined, Vol. I. chapter 2. See also, Dr. Stephen West's Dissertation on Infant Baptism, page 14.

so far, were as removed as possible from all legal principles, and from a mere temporal or civil alliance.

The land of Canaan was indeed promised to him; not however as a mere temporal acquisition, or for political purposes; but as a part of the inheritance of grace; as the cradle of the Church during its minority; as subservient to the diffusion of the blessing, which was to be transmitted through his natural descendants; as a theatre on which was to be transacted, the great work of our redemption; and as a type of heaven. It was promised in the same light that godliness, under the latter dispensation, has "promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

God promised also that he would make of Abraham a great nation; but it was not to be such in the ordinary acceptation of the words, for his posterity have never been such. The obvious meaning is, that his posterity should be exceedingly numerous; and that they should be contradistinguished from the world, as a holy people. The promise that he should be the heir of the world, it is evident, has also the same spiritual meaning. For Paul says, Romans iv. 13, that this promise, "was not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

This view of the character and moral state of Abraham, anterior to the appointment of circumcision, ought to have its due influence upon our minds, in estimating the nature and design of the covenant transactions, recorded in the 17th of Genesis. It can hardly be imagined that it was the divine plan, that what was so favorably begun in the spirit, should end in the flesh. After having elevated this patriarch to the honor of being the father of the whole family of the faithful to the end of the world; after having admitted him to such a free and covenant intercourse as his peculiar friend; after multiplying benedictions so altogether spiritual; it cannot readily be supposed, that he should sink him down to the pitiful condition, of being the founder of a mere political society; that too in a transaction introduced with uncommon solemnity.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Respecting the Covenant of Circumcision.*

IN the seventeenth chapter of the book of Genesis we are presented with what has been commonly denominated, the Covenant of Circumcision.

This covenant we shall now attempt to analyse. It is of the last importance to understand accurately the nature of this covenant; in what respects it agrees with, or is distinguishable from, any other covenant which may be found mentioned in the scriptures; the nature and extent of its promises; with whom it is established; and in what way its blessings are transmitted and enjoyed.

That we may look at the subject fairly, and prosecute our analysis upon secure principles, it may be proper to put down all that is said upon it in this chapter. "And when Abraham was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abraham fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying; As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee; and I will make thee exceeding fruitful; and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land,

wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with thy money must needs be circumcised. And, my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." The 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 verses, only inform us of Abraham's compliance with the command of God. He circumcised himself, Ishmael, and all that were born in his house, or bought with his money.

I. The first thing which claims to be noticed, respecting the covenant transaction recorded here, is, that circumcision itself was not the covenant. It was but the token of it. It is indeed called the covenant. But the meaning of this language is fully explained by what is said in the eleventh verse of the chapter. "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you." Paul gives the same explanation, Rom. iv. 12. "And he received *the sign* of circumcision, *a seal*, of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." That which is a token, sign, or seal of a thing, cannot at the same time be the very thing of which it is a token. The language is metonymical. Christ says, in the institution of the supper, referring to the bread before him, "This is my body." All protestants understand the meaning to be, *this is a symbol of my body*. The literal construction involves the most glaring absurdity.

If circumcision be only a token, then it was really no part of the covenant. And if it was no part of the covenant, certainly it was not a *condition* of it. A condition is always an essential part of the covenant, to which it belongs. Exclude the condition, and the covenant is destroyed.

It may in this connexion be farther remarked, that the painful nature of the operation, which took place when a person was circumcised, though it was a yoke, which required some selfdenial patiently to bear,* was no more inconsistent with the supposition, that the covenant, of which circumcision was a token, was exclusively of a gracious nature, than the innumerable distresses which have always been a part of the experience of the children of faith, are inconsistent with their being interested in the blessings of grace. Selfdenial is the narrow path by which all the people of God, under every dispensation, enter the gates of the heavenly city. To them it is given, not only to obtain salvation through, but to suffer, for the sake, of their adorable Redeemer. Faith must be tried. Self must be subdued. God must be enthroned. To all does the language of the Apostle Peter apply. 1 Peter i. 6. "Though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the *trial of your faith*, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

II. The next thing which claims to be noticed respecting the covenant here mentioned, is, that the promises of it, allowing for some verbal variations, are the same with those, which had been before made, in the antecedent covenant transactions with Abraham. The first promise respects the multitude of Abraham's posterity. The 2 and 6 verses are, "And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly. And thou shalt be a father of many nations

* Acts xv. 10.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." But the same thing had been repeatedly promised to Abraham before, as God's covenant with him. Thus in the first promise which was addressed to him, God said, Gen. xii. 2. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great." And in the xiii chapter, 16 verse. "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered." Again, chapter xv. 5th verse. "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, look toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them, and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be." It is evident that these promises are the same. They have respect to one object, the multitude of Abraham's posterity. I do not mean that they respect this object exclusively. For Paul, in the fourth chapter of Romans, 16, and onward, extends this clause of the promise, "And thou shalt be a father of many nations," to believing Gentiles; by which we are assured, that the salvation of these Gentiles was comprehended in this promise. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end, the promise might be sure to *all the seed*, not to that only which is of the law; but *to that also which is of the faith of Abraham*, (these are believing Gentiles) who is the Father of *us all.* *(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations)* before him, whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were; who against hope believed in hope; that he might become *the father of many nations;* according to that which is written, *so shall thy seed be.*" Here the promise is shewn to extend to a secondary object. This secondary object we shall shew directly was also embraced in promises previously made. In regard to the first object, the multitude

of a posterity, proceeding from Abraham's loins, it is undeniable, that the promises are the same.

Another promise of this covenant is, that God would give to Abraham, and his seed, the land of Canaan, verse 8. "And I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." This also had been a matter of covenant promise before. It was made when Abraham first came into the land of Canaan. Gen. xii. 7. "And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land." See also xiii chapter, 13, 14 and 17 verses. "And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up thine eyes now, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee. Arise and walk through the land, in the length, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee."

Another promise of this covenant is, that God would be a God unto Abraham. "And I will establish my covenant, between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, *to be a God unto thee.*" But this also, which is the sum of all conceivable good, as respected Abraham, had been engaged repeatedly before. The first covenant transaction which took place with Abraham, was this promise, though not in precisely the same words. Gen. xii. 1. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and *I will bless thee.*" This promise involved an assurance that God was, and ever would be, Abraham's God. Unquestionably, God is the God of the man whom he undertakes to bless. The call itself, the design of it, and the prompt obedience of Abraham, as a matter of faith, implied the same thing. Melchizedek's benediction testified that God was unalienably Abraham's God. God himself made a declaration equivalent with it, Gen. xv. 1. "Fear not Abraham, for I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This certainly a-

mounted to an engagement, on the part of God, that he would be Abraham's God.

So far then it is plain, that the covenant recorded here, is not at all distinguishable from the covenant transactions that went before it.

The remaining clause has some appearance of being a new engagement; but if carefully considered, it will be found, that even here the difference is verbal only. It is merely an explicit annunciation of what had before been implicitly engaged. The clause is this. "And I will establish my covenant with thee, *and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be their God.*" Surely the promises previously made, that the seed should increase to a vast multitude; that they should have the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; that they should have a peculiar elevation in the world; and especially this promise, "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," which Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, explains, as having special respect to Christ, as the seed, are equivalent with the promise contained in this clause. The words of Paul are, Galatians iii. 16. "Now to Abraham *and his seed* were the promises made." They were made to them jointly with Abraham, and they all terminated in a common good. They all implied therefore, that God would establish his covenant with them, and be their God. "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ." Christ was respected in *all* the promises. Hence the declaration in the following verse. "And this I say, that the *covenant*, which was confirmed before of God *in Christ*, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

It has been just shewn, that the promise, "And I will make thee a father of many nations," extends to the saved Gentiles. Now Paul, who has given us this explanation, has certified also, that this promise was made in the first covenant transaction which took place between God and Abraham. For, to confirm the as-

sertion, that, "the scripture foreseeing that God would *justify the heathen through faith*, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham," he quotes a clause in that first covenant transaction, Genesis xii. 3. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The covenant of circumcision was not then now established as an entirely new thing. It was only a new, and more explicit edition, of a covenant already made. The promises are several, and repeated, but the covenant is *one*. Christ was "the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm *the promises*, made unto the fathers." Yet he is the mediator of but one covenant. Hence the covenant transactions of God with Abraham, are so generally spoken of throughout the scriptures, in the singular form. Leviticus xxvi. 9. "For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish *my covenant* with you." Deuteronomy iv. 31. "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God, he will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget *the covenant* of the Fathers which he sware unto thee." Acts iii. 25. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of *the covenant*, which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed." The instances are very numerous.*

Does not this uniform manner of speaking, when God's covenant transactions with Abraham are in view, which runs through all parts of the Bible, lead us naturally, and necessarily to the conclusion, that all these transactions are *one* covenant? Are we not necessarily led to conclude also, that, allowing for such incidental variations, as particular promises to individuals, in their private capacity, involve, this covenant is none other than the one, eternal, gracious covenant of God, under a particular application, or fastening itself upon Abraham and his seed? That this is a fact, it is thought is made evident, by what has been already said on this one covenant; and it will be abundantly con-

* There are two or three exceptions. But when the plural form is used, it is evident, that the Horeb covenant is united with the Abrahamic.

firmed by the illustrations which will be produced.—Noah and Abraham were certainly under the same general covenant, though particular promises are made to the one, which are not made to the other. Hebrews xi. 8. "By faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir *of the righteousness which is by faith.*" Thus the same good essentially was secured to Noah by covenant, which is secured to Abraham by covenant. This was the case with Abel, and Enoch, and all the elders who obtained a good report through faith. It is the case with all the just; for "the just shall live by faith." Faith always terminates upon the promise of an *eternal inheritance.* Was Abraham the subject of any other covenant than that which secured to him the righteousness of faith; and which circumcision sealed; when, in all the retrospective language of scripture, the singular form is used; when the seed especially respected was Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen; and when, in the light of these promises, Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad?

The form of expression in the covenant, it is true, is in the future tense: "*I will* make, and *I will* establish." This manner of expression, however, may be fairly understood as meaning no more, than a new confirmation of the covenant, with a farther explanation of its articles, and the institution of a seal. And the indisputable fact, that the covenant had been made a long time, and repeated, makes this interpretation unavoidable.* The date which the apostle gives to the covenant established by God with Abraham, as 430 years before the law, perfectly coincides with the idea, that all God's covenant transactions with him constituted *one covenant.*—The date applies to the time when this covenant was first established with Abraham; i. e. when he was called from his father's house, and the first promises were

* "The scriptures which promise the *making* of a covenant, only intend the clearer manifestation and application of the covenant of grace to persons to whom it belongs." *Gills Reply to Clark*, page 11.

made to him, Genesis xii. 1. It was proper that the covenant should be dated here. All transactions of this kind are dated at their first establishment. This will do nothing towards proving that the covenant recorded in the 17th chapter of Genesis, is numerically distinct from the covenant promises previously made.

III. A third remark respecting the covenant of circumcision, entitled to notice, and to be noticed carefully, because it confirms what has been already said, is, that its promises are *absolute*.

An absolute promise is one, which is not suspended upon any contingence. It cannot be vacated by any circumstance whatever. Absolute promises may respect very different things. The execution of them may involve, as has been already suggested, activity on the part of him, whom the promises respect. In this case they are absolute, no less, than if all the agency were on the part of the promisor. For the term absolute characterizes, neither the agent nor the object; but the promise. The promises made to Abraham were all of this kind. They respected moral beings, and secured an active conformity to the spirit of the promises *in them*. To say therefore, "that *if* Abraham and his seed had not been obedient to the covenant, it would not have taken effect with respect to them;" though it be true, is to say nothing incompatible with the idea, that its promises were absolute. A bare inspection of the promises of this covenant, one would think, sufficient to shew them to be absolute. "*I will* multiply thee exceedingly—my covenant *is* with thee —thou *shalt* be a father of many nations—and *I will establish* my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant *to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee*— And *I will give* unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an *everlasting* possession, and *I will be* their God— *I will* bless thee, and thou *shalt* be a blessing—I *will bless him* that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee *shall all families of the earth be*

*blessed.*" These promises are of one kind, and they are certainly absolute ; for not a condition is mentioned. Nothing like reserve or contingence appears. Hence it was that God revealed himself to Moses, under this peculiar, lasting memorial, " the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob ;" i. e. as maintaining his unalterable engagements, to them. Hence also, when anticipating the then future perverseness of a large proportion of Abraham's natural descendants, and foretelling the judgments, which, in consequence, he would bring upon them, God, to preclude all suspicion of his faithfulness, says, Leviticus, xxvi. 24, " Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I *will not cast them away*, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them *utterly*, and *to break my covenant with them*, for I am the Lord their God. But I will, for their sakes, *remember the covenaut of their ancestors*, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God." This passage teaches us, that no perverseness in Israel, could induce God to break his covenant. Then the promises of it were not suspended upon any contingence ; no, not upon the condition of obedience. There seems then, to be abundant evidence of the absolute nature of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, from the unconditional manner in which they are expressed. But this idea is confirmed by all the representations of scripture, by the nature of the purpose which these promises unfold, by fact, and by the necessity of the case. To collect and arrange this evidence, would be superfluous. But I cannot forbear to mention the manner in which the promises of the covenant are spoken of, in Hebrews vi. 13th, and onward, as God's *swearing*, and as his *oath*, and as declarative of his *counsel ;* therefore, exhibiting ground of sure confidence to Abraham. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could *swear* by no greater, he *swore* by himself, saying, *surely*, blessing, I will bless thee ; and multiplying, I will multiply thee ; and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise : For men verily *swear* by the greater, and an *oath for confir-*

*mation* is to them the end of all strife. *Wherein*, (that is, in this very engagement entered into with Abraham.) God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise *the immutability of his counsel*, confirmed it by an *oath*; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, *we* might have *strong consolation* who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have, as an anchor to the soul, both *sure* and *stedfast*, entering to that within the vail." It is to be noticed, that the immutability of God's counsel, is here said to be revealed in the promises made to Abraham; and is extended to all the heirs of promise, or subjects of grace, who are considered as united with him in the reception of *the blessing*. This *immutable counsel*, this *strong consolation*, and this hope which is *sure* and *stedfast*, are a common inheritance among all who, as believers, are objects of promise; whether they now exist or not; those who live after Christ, as well as those who lived before him; and are all connected with the oath, addressed to Abraham. The counsel was what the oath confirmed to him, and to all the heirs of promise. The counsel and the oath are two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. He can neither alter his purpose, nor forfeit his veracity. As this counsel, and this oath respect all the heirs of promise, they furnish strong consolation to them, the moment they have evidence that they have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them. The hope they possess, being founded upon such a bottom, is indeed sure and stedfast. It is so sure and so stedfast, that nothing, not even their own perverseness, can unsettle it. Surely then, the covenant established with Abraham, is the Gospel covenant; God's one gracious and eternal covenant, under a particular application; and its promises are absolute. It is evidently in this view that Christ's advent is spoken of, Luke i. 72, as taking place "*in remembrance of the covenant.*" If he had not come, God would unfaithfully have forgotten his covenant.*

* Dr. Bellamy, though in favor of the conditionality of the covenant of circumcision, concedes, that "it was expressed in the form of an absolute unconditional promise." *See Reply to Mather*, page 32.

To suppose the promises of this covenant conditional, is to suppose, that at the time they were made, there was no security that one of them would take effect. It is to suppose there was no certainty that God would *establish* his covenant with Abraham's seed at all; that he would ever give them the land of Canaan; or that in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed.

If any one should imagine that the initial language of this covenant, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee," implies, that the promises of the covenant are suspended upon a condition, a recurrence to what has been said will surely correct his mistake. This was simply a direction which respected Abraham personally; the observation of which was indeed his duty. But this duty was so far from being a contingence upon which the covenant was suspended, that it was secured by the promise of it. It was the determined way in which it should take effect. That promise which assured that God would be the God of Abraham, his shield and exceeding great reward, assured, that Abraham would dutifully maintain this relation. The promise that secured a seed, to whom God would be a God, secured the holiness of that seed. Law, though always obligatory, is never against the promise. Grace and duty are perfectly coincident. If any doubt remains with the reader respecting the doctrine now advanced, that the promises of the covenant of circumcision were all absolute, it is presumed none will remain after he has progressed a little farther in this analysis.

IV. The next thing to be ascertained, in regard to this covenant is, who the *covenantees* are. Respecting Abraham the father there is no doubt. To him the promise is expressly addressed as its immediate object. But the convenant was not only to be established with him; but also, and as unfrustrably, with his *seed*. God promised to Abraham a *seed*, that would establish his covenant with *that seed*, and be their God. Whom are we to understand to be here intended by *the seed?* To settle this question rightly, is of the great-

est consequence; and, as contrary theories have spread a good deal of obscurity over it, requires a patient investigation. Beyond all doubt, if we will impartially follow the light of scripture, we shall find this question determined conclusively. That we may proceed with certainty, it seems necessary to premise, that the term *seed* has both a *literal*, and a *figurative* meaning. The literal meaning is one thing, and the figurative meaning is another. Christ says to the unbelieving Jews, John viii. 37, "I know that ye are Abraham's *seed*, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." And again, verse 39. "If ye were Abraham's *children*, ye would do the works of Abraham." Here, though a different term is used, the two senses are brought into view. The former is the literal; the latter is the figurative sense. In the first passage, Christ acknowledges that the Jews were what they claimed to be, lineal descendants from Abraham. But he denies the conclusion, that they were of his character, and partakers with him of the blessing. In the second passage he speaks of them, as not being children of Abraham in character. If they were, he tells them, they would do the works of Abraham. If these Jews had been disposed to do Abraham's works, they would have proved themselves his true seed, his seed in both respects, morally considered, as well as by lineal descent. The term seed is used by Paul in the figurative sense, Gal. iii. 29. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's *seed*, and heirs according to the promise." The term seed is here applied to converts from the Gentile world. These converts were not Abraham's seed, by natural descent. They were his seed, only as they were of faith, and blessed with him, or partakers with him of promise.

These two entirely distinct meanings of the term seed, cannot be confounded. They are as distinct, and remote from each other, as if they were exact contraries. It is true, that in two or three instances, and the examples have been already introduced, the term seed is *extended* to the saved from the Gentile world,

in connexion with natural descendants. Still, in almost every case in which the term is used through the scripture, it is used in the literal sense, as meaning appropriately natural descendants from Abraham. When it is used as extending to both, *they* are primarily intended. The reader will see this confirmed as we proceed. I say they are intended, *as natural descendants*, in the literal sense; a sense by which they are entirely distinguished from Gentile believers.

It is evident, that, by the seed, in the covenant of circumcision, must be meant, primarily, and in the literal sense, natural descendants from Abraham, as such; or believers generally, must be meant, without any respect to a descent from him. Let it here be carefully noticed, that if a natural seed are primarily intended, they may be a seed in character also. The covenant may be actually established with them. Whereas if a spiritual seed simply is intended, without any special respect to a descent from Abraham, then, though the covenant may be established with *them*, it may be, that not one descendant from Abraham shall be found among them. I mean for ought that can be learned from the covenant.

Now, that a seed literally, or according to the flesh must be primarily intended, and intended under that description, will, I apprehend, be evident from the following considerations.

1. It is a good and an established rule of interpretation, that the primitive, literal meaning of a term should always be taken, unless the subject treated of be such as to make it necessary to take it figuratively.* Without the use of this rule, words will be always indeterminate. If the figurative sense be designed, the subject itself must clearly determine that it is so. But surely, in this case, there is nothing in the subject which makes it necessary to take the term seed in the mere figurative sense. There is in fact every thing

* "The literal sense is always to be preferred to the figurative, unless there appears plain and good reasons to the contrary."

*Hemmenway on Baptism.*

against it. To apply the figurative sense will make all these covenant transactions, not only ambiguous, but wholly inexplicable. It will be impossible to find the objects in whom several of these promises were fulfilled. We are at the outset then, presented with a very strong presumption, that by the term seed are meant, primarily, natural decendants from Abraham's body.

2. It is evident Abraham himself could receive no other idea from the term, as it was used, in the several covenant transactions, which took place between God, and him. His separation had a family design. Several of the promises made to him were such as to oblige him to apply them to his natural descendants. The promise, "I will make *of thee* a great nation, and kings shall *come out of thee ;* must have had respect to a natural posterity. The promise that his seed should be as the stars in heaven for multitude, was equivalent with the promise just mentioned, and primarily to be taken in the same sense. The promise that his seed should possess the land of Canaan, could apply to natural descendants only. To them, and to them only, has the promise been fulfilled. But if the term seed, in these promises, be certainly to be taken primarily, in its literal meaning; beyond a question, it is so to be taken in the whole of the covenant. The meaning of the term cannot be supposed to be changed when the subject is not. The following promise was superadded to that which immediately respected the seed. "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Here the diffusion of spiritual blessings beyond the limits of Abraham's naturaly posterity is in view. But the objects of these blessings are not intended primarily by the *seed.* This is undeniable. For it was *in* Abraham that all these families of the earth were to be blessed. They are only spoken of. He is the immediate covenantee. But how were they to be blessed *in* Abraham ? Not in him personally only, but especially in his *seed.* He is identified with his seed. This Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians clearly illustrates. 3 Chapter 15. verse. "That the bles-

sing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through *Jesus Christ*, that *we* might receive the promise of the spirit through faith." Jesus Christ was the seed naturally. He was a lineal descendant from Abraham. "Of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came," Romans ix. 5. He was eminently *the seed*. For the apostle adds. "Now to Abraham, and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many, but as of *one*, and to *thy seed*, which is Christ."* Christ certainly was not of the *spiritual seed*, i. e. of the seed in the mere figurative sense. He was not one of those whom God's gracious covenant contemplated to save from their sins. He was the seed, merely as a natural descendant from Abraham. "He took on him the seed of Abraham." Heb. ii. 16, the seed of the woman, of the Virgin Mary, that seed, which was to bruise the serpent's head; and in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen. Then by the term seed is undeniably meant a natural offspring. This thought, that Christ is the seed, not as one of the saved; but as lineally descended, the reader is requested to keep in remembrance. For it will go far towards elucidating several other parts of our subject.†

3. The use of the term *generations* in the covenant, constrains us to understand the term seed, as applicable to natural descendants from Abraham as such. "And thy seed after thee in their *generations* for an

* The promise was originally made to Abraham as the immediate covenantee. It was made to the seed as a subject of promise, and standing in covenant connexion with Abraham. Christ was *eminently*, not *exclusively*, this seed. All of the posterity of Abraham, who were connected with him as brethren in the covenant, came jointly with him under this denomination. In this view he appropriates the common relation indicated by the term seed. "I ascend to *my* father, and to *your* father; to *my* God, and to *your* God." He is accordingly said to be "the first born among many brethren." Exactly comporting with which is the passage, Heb. ii. 11, 12. "For both *he* who *sanctifieth*, and *they* who are *sanctified*, are all of *one*, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*, saying," &c.

† A Mr. Samuel Manning, in a late pamphlet, which I am credibly informed came from the press under the inspection and patronage of one of the ableſt Baptist writers in this Country, tells us, page, 27, that the promise mentioned in the above argument, made to Christ as Abraham's seed, "ultimately respected Christ, *as God*." Then Christ was Abraham's seed as God. Then, when Christ took on him, the ſeed of Abraham, he took on him godhead. This is certainly worse than transubstantiation. For it is not only a war with common sense, but a denial of express divine teſtimony.

everlasting covenant." This term does not apply to a spiritual seed, irrespective of a natural descent from Abraham. Such a seed therefore is not designed by the term seed in the covenant. The term generation is indeed sometimes used figuratively to characterize both good and bad men. But this is not the import of it in this place. To apply this sense to it would load the promise with absurdity.

4. To say that a spiritual seed is designated, as such, irrespective of descent, would imply, that Abraham had no more reason to calculate that either temporal or spiritual blessings, would come upon his lineal descendants, than upon the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, or the world at large. A natural offspring was not, upon this supposition, respected in the promise. For ought that Abraham could learn, his natural seed might all be reprobated; and the rest of the world be chosen, and saved. But this would be to separate Abraham entirely from his natural posterity, as to a covenant relation to God; it would take away those very consolations respecting them, which the covenant was designed to administer; enfeeble his motives to fidelity in instructing his seed; destroy the distinction which is made throughout the scriptures, and in a multitude of facts, between his posterity and the world; and would be to load with absurdity the whole Bible.

5. To suppose that by the term seed is meant a spiritual seed at large, and not natural descendants from Abraham as such, is to take away all cause for the application of circumcision to Abraham's lineal descendants, and particularly in their *infancy*. Circumcision is certainly to be applied to the seed mentioned in the covenant. Verses 9, 10, 11. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, *thou* and *thy seed* after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy *seed* after thee, every *manchild among you shall be circumcised*. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the *covenant betwixt me and you*." Beyond a question, the term seed

has the same meaning here, that it has in the preceding verses. The subjects are not altogether changed without any notice given of it. But the seed here certainly means natural descendants. For it is added as an explanatory direction, " every *manchild among you* shall be circumcised. And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt *me* and *you*." To the natural seed then circumcision was to be applied. And it was to be applied to them as a party in the covenant. But if a spiritual seed merely, as such, was respected, this direction would have been irrelevant, and the application of circumcision to the natural seed wholly unmeaning.

6. The Apostle Paul in the 9th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, expressly applies the term seed, as meaning natural offspring. 7th verse. " Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they *all children;* but *in Isaac* shall *thy seed* be called. By the term *seed* he evidently means natural offspring. He is speaking about *them* only. They were his brethren according to the flesh. His whole description applies to them, and to them only. " Who are *Israelites*, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; *whose are the fathers*, and of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed forever." The distinction he makes between the nominal and true Israel applies to them only. " Not as though the word of God, had taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel." When therefore, in the latter part of the verse, he applies the term *seed* to Isaac, it is evidently in the literal sense. Isaac is one of the seed intended in the promise. But he is such as the fruit of Sarah's womb.

It may be thought, and it has often been suggested, that the following verse is opposed to this idea. But it is not. It is only explanatory of the doctrine of discriminating grace, which the Apostle had mentioned, and on which he insists throughout this, and the two

following chapters, as extending to the natural seed of Abraham, as well as the world at large. "That is, they which are the children of the flesh; these are not the children of God; but the children of *promise* are counted for the seed."* *All* the natural offspring of Abraham are not as such the children of God. *Some* of them however are. They are as such. For "*in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" The seed was called in Isaac, as Abraham's child, descended from his body. Yet it was also called in Isaac in distinction from Ishmael, as he was a child of promise, and stood in special relation to Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. This idea the Apostle illustrates as he proceeds. "For this is the word of *promise*; at this time will I come and Sarah shall have a son." Isaac was a child of special *promise*. Ishmael was not. Verse 10th, "And not only this, but when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our Father Isaac (for the children, being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Here the Apostle carefully runs the distinction of discriminating grace, between the elect, and the non elect parts of the nominal seed. Yet the nominal seed, or the seed according to the flesh only is in view. This is evident from the destinction he makes. To suppose that by *seed*, he means all believers, as such, without any respect to descent from Abraham, would destroy the unity of his discoure, and the force of his argument. Directly indeed, he extends his remarks to persons who were not lineal descendants from Abraham; but this is only to illustrate the same doctrine of divine sovereignity, as extending to all the saved. By the term seed then the Apostle evidently means Abraham's lineal descendants only.

* The general mistake in applying this passage has been founded in unwarrantably extending it beyond the subjects of the Apostle's discourse. He has respect to no others than to Abraham's natural descendants, or *the children of the flesh.*

Hence, after having in such a solemn manner insisted on the severity, as well as on the goodness of God, he anticipates, in the beginning of the 11th chapter, the question, which he foresaw would naturally rise in the minds of those to whom he was writing; "I say then hath God cast away his people?" There would have been no propriety in this question, if the Apostle had excluded the natural descendants of Abraham as having no *special* interest in the covenant. But if they have a *special* interest in the covenant, beyond all doubt, they have it as *the seed*. "God forbid. For I also am an *Israelite*, of the *seed* of Abraham. God hath not cast away his people which he *foreknew*."

As we shall be obliged to recal this distinction directly, we shall here take leave of it; having sufficiently shown, not only that it is consistent with, but a proof, that by the term seed are meant, in the covenant, lineal descendants.

7. But one more proof will be added to establish this, as the proper sense of the word *seed*, in the covenant. This proof is furnished in the declaration of Peter to the Jews, Acts iii. 25. "Ye are the *children* of the prophets, and of the *covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy *seed* shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed." These Jews were *children* of the *covenant*, not as believers; for Peter did not address them as sustaining this character; but as chargeable with great wickedness in killing the Prince of life. They were in his view *children of the covenant* only as lineal descendants from Abraham. The terms *children of the covenant* are used as equivalent with that of seed. For he supports his declaration by adverting to that clause in the covenant in which the term seed is inserted. "Saying unto Abraham, and in thy *seed* shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."

Against this theory there are objections, which it is proper here to notice.

1. It is objected, that "as the same declarations and promises are made in the covenant with respect to the

seed, which are made with respect to Abraham, personally, it will follow, that the natural seed of Abraham *without distinction* are interested in the covenant of grace, as extensively as Abraham himself, which is contrary to scripture, and to fact." The explanations already made, furnish a reply to this objection. Though the term seed be used in the covenant indefinitely, for reasons which will soon be mentioned, it is not to be understood as applying, so as to involve an interest in the promise, to *all* the natural offspring without exception. This is evident from what has already been said, and will be more fully illustrated in some subsequent remarks.

2. It is farther objected, "that the term seed cannot mean natural descendants of Abraham, because, upon that supposition, circumcision, as a token of the covenant, must have been *confined* to Abraham's natural children; whereas the institution extended to all that were born in his house, and bought with his money." Answer. This objection lies equally against the other hypothesis, that the term seed is to be taken figuratively. For circumcision was certainly applied to other persons than a spiritual seed. If circumcision were confined to the seed, and yet extended to others, besides lineal descendants; if it were *so* extended to the latter, as to have no appropriate respect to the former; then indeed it must be conceded, either, that circumcision had no connexion with the seed, or that by *the seed* were intended other persons than lineal descendants, and that it had no special respect to such descendants at all. But the express distinction which is made in the law of circumcision, between *the seed* and others, as subjects of circumcision, undeniably proves, that it was not thus confined; and that natural descendants were intended by the seed. "This is my covenant therefore which ye shall keep between me and you, and *thy seed* after thee. Every manchild *among you*, shall be circumcised. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you; every manchild in *your generations*; he that is born in the

house, or bought with thy money, of any stranger which *is not of thy seed.*" This express distinction, *which is not of thy seed*, is nugatory, upon the supposition that the term seed is used figuratively for a spiritual seed merely. There would have been no propriety in mentioning the *natural seed* at all.

3. It is again objected, "that natural descendants from Abraham, as such, cannot be intended by *the seed*, because Ishmael, who was from his loins, is expressly excluded from the covenant, as born after the flesh; [illegible]e and his posterity are spoken of as allegorically representing the law; and as persecuting the seed." But surely this proves directly the contrary. It confirms the idea, that by seed are meant lineal descendants from Abraham. For, why is Ishmael excluded? Why is the distinction made between him and Isaac? Evid[illegible]ly, because with Isaac he was Abraham's natural son. The seed then had respect to natural descent. Had the term respected believers in general, without any respect to a descent from Abraham, there would have been no propriety in mentioning Ishmael as excluded, any more than any one of the reprobate world.

Besides, it is by no means certain that Ishmael *personally* was not a subject of the covenant, so far as to have God for his God. And this might be on another principle than that of being *the seed;* i. e. as some of the servants of Abraham were. This principle we shall have occasion more fully to explain directly.—The limitation of the *seed* to the line of Isaac, no more excluded Ishmael from the personal felicity of having God for his God, than it excluded Cornelius, who was by birth a Roman. Be this however as it may, the fact mentioned in the objection, evidently proves the very thing that the objection opposes.

4. It is moreover objected, "that the term seed cannot intend natural offspring as such, because the term is confined by Paul, Romans iv. 16, to believers." The words are these, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be

sure to *all the seed;* not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." But the passage itself confutes the objection. For why the distinction between the seed which *is of the law*, and that which is of *faith?* Does not that which is mentioned as *of the law*, intend those who are Jews by *nature*? And does not the seed which is of *faith* intend believers from the Gentile world? Most evidently. For in the 11th and 12th verses, the Apostle says, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also, (i. e. Gentile believers) *and the father of circumcision* to them who are not of the circumcision *only;* but *also* walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumcised."

By those who are not of the circumcision only, are designed lineal descendants from Abraham. They are part of the seed; and they are so under that description, as lineal descendants; of course as the natural seed. Believing Jews, and believing Gentiles are equally covenant children of Abraham, or joint heirs with Christ, of covenant blessings. And this is what is intended by the terms in the passage *all the seed.*— They are equivalent with all the *saved.* But this does not militate with the idea, that by the term seed in the covenant, is meant primarily and appropriately natural descendants. Because these belong, as a distinct class, to *all the seed;* or are not of the circumcision only, *but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham*, which he had, being yet uncircumcised."

These objections, and there are no other, of any plausibility, which have occurred to the Author in the course of his reading, being found futile, the conclusion may be taken as questionless, that the term seed, in the covenant, intends, primarily and especially, a natural seed as such.

The promise then being to be taken as absolute, and as respecting a natural seed, another question now pre-

sents itself, of as great importance as the former, viz. Did the promise embrace as those with whom it was to be carried into effect, or be *established, all* the seed without exception, or *all* Abraham's natural descendants? This question has been in some degree unavoidably anticipated. But the truth respecting it is so fundamental, that it must be yet more clearly ascertained. And if we should repeat some things which have been already suggested, it will be easily pardoned. On the just solution of the question, Who are intended by *the seed?* depend essentially all correct views of the Abrahamic covenant, and the economy of God's holy kingdom. It must be acknowledged, the word is used here in the xvii. of Genesis indefinitely. At the same time it must be admitted, that it is so used, as not necessarily to extend to *all* the posterity of Abraham *numerically*. If the word is necessarily to be understood as embracing *all* the individuals, who sprung from Abraham's loins, then it involves essentially the idea of number. If not, then it is rather a generic term, designating a *class*, a *society*. It is undeniable that words are often used in the scriptures in this large sense; as descriptive of a *collection* of persons, when all the individuals, who stand related are not *numerically* intended. Thus it is said of the race of man generally, Gen. xi. 12. "*The earth* also was corrupt before God, and the *earth* was *filled* with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt. For all *flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth." But Noah personally did not come under this description. The prophet Jer. says, v. 23. "But this *people* hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone." But there were individuals unquestionably who had not bowed the knee to any false God. "Ephraim," says Hosea, "is joined to his idols, let him alone." But it is not to be supposed that all Ephraim numerically, were idolatrous. The Church of Smyrna as a body, is honorably characterized. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast

not denied my faith, even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where satan dwelleth." Yet there were some in that Church who held the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicholaitans. To suppose then that the term seed, is not to be taken as designating Abraham's descendants *numerically*, but *classically;* and that *a part of them only* are really embraced, is more agreeable to the analogy of scripture language than otherways. Now, let us consider what the Holy Ghost teaches relative to this matter.

Some of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, it is evident, are necessarily to be appropriated to a *part* of the nominal seed. The promise, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," is expressly appropriated by Paul to Christ, and that part of Abraham's posterity, who had life *in him.* "Not as of *many;* but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ." The promise, "for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever;" applied to a *part* of the natural seed only. With respect to a *part* of them *only* was it executed. Thousands fell short of the promised land through unbelief.* The prediction, "Know of a surety that *thy seed,* shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years," applied to a *part* of the posterity only. Abraham himself must have been led to entertain a restricted idea of the seed, from the very terms of the covenant. "And the uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant." Here the possibility of breaking the covenant, i. e. of fatally trampling on

* A restriction of the term seed, as applying to a *part* of Abraham's natural descendants only, is admitted by Dr. Cyprian Strong in regard to this promise, in his Second Enquiry, page 21. "This promise of Canaan however did not respect *all* the posterity of Abraham. The promise only imported that *some* of Abraham's posterity (more or fewer, as God in his sovereignty should determine) should possess that land." If the term seed, in regard to the extent of its application, may be subjected to this limitation in respect to the promise of the land of Canaan; why may it not be subjected to a similar limitation in regard to the more substantial interests of the covenant?

the duties it enjoined, is presented to Abraham's view. And what else can be the ground of his prayer respecting Ishmael? "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" If all the individuals of the natural posterity were embraced in the promise, there was already a certainty that Ishmael would live before God. The prayer implies that Abraham was apprehensive, that notwithstanding the promise of the covenant, Ishmael might be excluded from the divine favor.

In the 21st. verse of the chapter, the covenant is unequivocally explained to Abraham as having an exclusive reference. "But my covenant will *I establish with Isaac*, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee in the set time in the next year."

After the birth of Isaac, Sarah, prompted as it would seem by a special divine impulse, for it is quoted by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians in that light, says to Abraham, "Cast out this bond woman, and her son; for the son of this bond woman, shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." Abraham had too much natural affection for his son Ishmael, to be pleased with this apparently severe measure. But God says to him, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of the bond woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for, *in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*"

This appropriation of the covenant engagement as it respects the seed, to Isaac, the Apostle Paul treats as an initial dispensation, which gave a cast to the whole divine economy respecting the seed. "Because they were the seed of Abraham, they were not *all* children." *Some* of them were. They were the children respected in the promise." For the children of the *promise*, are counted for the seed." Romans ix. 7, 8. These were *the Israel* who were *of Israel.* They were *the remnant according to the election of grace*, the remnant as it respected Israel at large. For Romans ix. 29. "Except the Lord of Sabaoth, had left us (us Israel) a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha," i. e. we had been *all*

given up to destruction. They were those who, Ephes. i. 5. "Were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of his will." They were those who were made accepted in the beloved; who, in every age walked in the steps of that faith of their father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised. This was the character of a part of the natural posterity only, "more or fewer" at different times, "as God in his sovereignty determined." The residue were children without faith. They entered not in because of unbelief. They rejected the covenant of their God; and generally went off into open idolatry in some form or other. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God." They stumbled at this stumbling stone. While the election, i. e. the election of Israel, obtained, *they* were blinded. Hence, the solemn declaration of Moses just before his decease, Deut. xxxi. 16, and onward. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people shall rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be amongst them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant, which I have made with them.* Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day; and I will forsake them, and hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, Are not all these evils come upon us because the Lord our God is not among us? Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel; put it into their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers that floweth with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxed fat,

* Though the promise of the covenant in strictness, or as to its effect, extended to the election only; yet the covenant as has been hinted, and as will be more fully explained directly, was made or established, as to its outward administration, with the whole body.

then will they turn unto other Gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them, as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they go about even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware." This is a predictive view of the reprobate part of Israel.

Agreeable to this is the direction of God to the prophet Isaiah. Isai. vi. 9. 10. "Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed."

John, the Baptist, urged strenuously this distinction, between the elect, and the nonelect parts of the descendants of Abraham. Matt. iii. 7. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said to them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come; Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for God is able even of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." This declaration had evidently a special, primary respect to nominal Israel, for it was addressed to those who belonged to them.

Our Savior insisted much on the same distinction. He says, "Many are called, but few chosen—Ye cannot believe because ye are not of my sheep as I said unto you—And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; but the children of the kingdom, (the disobedient part of the visible seed) shall be cast

out into utter darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And in his prayer, John xvii. he says. "I pray for *them;* I pray not for the world, (those among the Jews who died in their sins) but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine, and all thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father keep through thine own name, *those whom thou hast given me,* that they may be one as we are."

The distinction runs through all Paul's writings; several passages of which, to the point, have been already quoted; which, to avoid repetition as much as possible, we shall forbear to mention here. The 9, 10 and 11th chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, are especially full to this point.

St. Peter brings it into view with great clearness in the 2d chapter of his first Epistle. It is to be noted that this Epistle is addressed to the *strangers* (i. e. believing Jews) dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are characterized, as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." To them, he says, "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; *but unto them which be disobedient;* the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, *where unto also they were appointed.* But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Finally, this distinction is presented in the sealing of a definite number out of every tribe of Israel, mentioned in the 7th chapter of the Apocalypse. "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried aloud to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed *the servants of our God* in

their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred, and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

Facts exactly coincide with these doctrinal representations of the scripture. Abraham had other children, besides Ishmael and Isaac. He had six sons by a woman, whom he married after Sarah's death. But they were not counted for the seed, respected in the promise. Gen. xxv. 5. "Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac, as the heir; but unto the sons of the Concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son while he yet lived, eastward unto the east Country." Jacob had an elevation to the prejudice of Esau, as to his primogeniture. He was established the heir, and counted *for the seed*, with whom the covenant was to take effect, before he was born. Gen. xxv. 23. The whole history of Jacob exhibits him in this light, as an object of special covenant favor, in distinction from Esau. The Israelites and Edomites, as bodies, were as distinguishable, as are now the Church and the world. Some of Israel fell in the wilderness; and others entered into the promised land. In the time of Rehoboam the largest branch was cut off from the stock. The ten tribes separated from the tribe of Judah, and went off into idolatry, in which they have continued to the present day. The seed was from that time perpetuated peculiarly in the tribe of *Judah*. "In *Judah* God was known. He *refused* the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of *Judah, the mount Zion which he loved;* and he built his sanctuary like high places, like the earth which he hath established forever." Psalm lxxvili. 67—69. When Elijah complained of the apostacy of the people as universal, God assured him, that, "he had reserved to himself *seven thousand men*, that had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

When the Messiah appeared, he sat, in exact fulfilment of the prediction delivered by Malachi, "as a re-

finer and purifier of silver. He was a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppressed the hireling in his wages, the widow and fatherless, and that turned aside the stranger from his right, and that feared not God." According to the prophetic denunciation of John, he gathered *the wheat* into his garner, and burnt up *the chaff* with unquenchable fire. To *as many* as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons* of God, even to them who believed on his name." To the residue he says, Mat. xxiii. 34. "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon *this generation.*" By generation here is evidently intended, according to the distinction urged; not all numerically who lived in that day; but all of a class; those who were blinded. In the days of the Apostles, *some* stood by faith, while *others* were broken off for unbelief. And in eternity, we find, as a representation of the issue, *Dives* in *hell*, and *Lazarus* in *Abraham's bosom*, both of them natural descendants from Abraham.

From the position that the term seed was designed to comprehend all the individuals numerically, what consequences, directly opposed to all this scripture evidence, and to millions of facts, will follow? It will follow, that no soul could ever be cut off from his people. It will follow, that all the seed numerically have had the faith of Abraham, and are saved. It will follow, that divine sovereignty does not discriminate between one part of Abraham's natural offspring and another, where it is expressly insisted on, all over the scriptures; it will follow, that no wrath can be expressed towards any part of the nominal seed; and yet it

their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred, and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

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finer and purifier of silver. He was a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppressed the hireling in his wages, the widow and fatherless, and that turned aside the stranger from his right, and that feared not God." According to the prophetic denunciation of John, he gathered *the wheat* into his garner, and burnt up *the chaff* with unquenchable fire. To *as many* as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons* of God, even to them who believed on his name." To the residue he says, Mat. xxiii. 34. "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon *this generation.*" By generation here is evidently intended, according to the distinction urged; not all numerically who lived in that day; but all of a class; those who were blinded. In the days of the Apostles, *some* stood by faith, while *others* were broken off for unbelief. And in eternity, we find, as a representation of the issue, *Dives* in *hell*, and *Lazarus* in *Abraham's bosom*, both of them natural descendants from Abraham.

From the position that the term seed was designed to comprehend all the individuals numerically, what consequences, directly opposed to all this scripture evidence, and to millions of facts, will follow? It will follow, that no soul could ever be cut off from his people. It will follow, that all the seed numerically have had the faith of Abraham, and are saved. It will follow, that divine sovereignty does not discriminate between one part of Abraham's natural offspring and another, where it is expressly insisted on, all over the scriptures; it will follow, that no wrath can be expressed towards any part of the nominal seed; and yet it

their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred, and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

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is expressly said, "that wrath has come upon them to the uttermost." It will follow, that it was a valid covenant plea, which the Jews advanced, "We have Abraham to our father;" whereas, it is expressly condemned, as having no warrant in the covenant.

It will follow, that the covenant was so constructed as to give the reins entirely to licentiousness, with respect to the descendants of Abraham; in the same manner that the doctrine of universal salvation does, with respect to the world at large, and it will follow, that all the solemn denunciations of the holy Jesus against the hypocrites among the Jews, were words without reason or meaning.

Upon the whole, we conclude with certainty, that the *seed* respected in the covenant, and with whom it was established, is that *portion* of the natural descendants of Abraham, who were predestinated to be joint heirs with Christ of an everlasting inheritance. These are numerous, and are characterized in a manner which does by no means apply to all the nominal Israel. For the writer to the Hebrews says xi. 13 and 14 verses. "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore *innumerable*. These *all* died *in faith*, not having received the promises,* but having seen them *afar off*, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city."

Having ascertained whom we are to understand by the seed, we are next to enquire respecting the *visibility* of the seed. This is of importance, that we may have just views of the divine economy in regard to the Church, and that we may duly regulate our own conduct. A thing may be contemplated as being what it is in the sight of *God*, who cannot err; and what it *appears* to be in the sight of *man*, who has not intuition,

* How strange that any one should suppose the promises respected ultimately temporal objects; when the true Israel did not in this world *receive them*.

but whose judgment is to be regulated by evidence. To God, before whom all things are naked and open, the distinction between visible and invisible does not apply. But to men, who receive their ideas through a fallible medium, it does. We find ourselves often mistaken with respect to the objects we contemplate. The earth appears to us a plain, and that it is, has been the serious opinion of thousands of philosophers. But voyagers have proved it to be a globe. Judas was considered, by his fellow disciples, as a friend to Christ, till the treasonable designs of his heart were disclosed. The divine Being, perfectly wise and good, ever treats man according to his nature. He does not require of him knowledge beyond the reach of his capacities.—His institutions, and laws, must of course be ever understood, as coinciding with his condition and capacity. They must be suited to the doctrine, that, *man looketh on the outward appearance.* To interpose by constant revelations, in order to determine the real moral state and future destiny of every individual, would be incompatible with a state of trial. To unmask the hypocrite, and extirpate him from the midst of the holy people, would be to anticipate the judgment. Engaged to perpetuate a seed to Abraham, and designing them, not only as monuments of his grace, but as depositaries of his will, it was necessary that God should form them into a *visible society;* that they should be *as a city* set on an hill *which cannot be hid.* In this case they would have reciprocal obligations to one another. They would be visibly brethren; and be bound to treat each other as such. This visible society would necessarily comprehend some, and it may be very many, who are not really children of promise. The wheat and the tares, as is the case in the Christian Church, would necessarily grow together. The purest discipline would not prevent; and never was designed to prevent it. Discipline is designed to extirpate *open offenders*; but not those, who, though in the sight of God they may be servants of Satan, in the sight of men, are servants of God. For God to deter-

mine, then, and to inform us, who are the seed *under his eye*, is *one thing*; and for him to direct us whom *we* are to *consider*, and *treat* as the seed, is another. It may be necessary for us, while obedient to his direction, to treat some as not of the seed, who really *are*; and some as of the seed who really are *not*. Neither Elijah nor the disciples appear to have acted improperly, in their treatment of those whom their opinions respected.* So long as Judas appeared to the disciples, to be, or they were taught by Christ to view and treat him, as a friend; they could not with propriety treat him as an enemy. It was necessary then for God to inform whom he would have viewed and treated as the seed? Now, what has he in fact informed us on this important point? I answer. He has told us, that we are to consider and treat all *those*, as the seed, who are *natural descendants* of Abraham, *excepting such, as he has himself rejected by his testimony.* This testimony may be either direct and express; or be made in the execution of the laws which he has enacted, for the very purpose of, "discerning between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not." The covenant was established, as to the outward administration of it, with the natural seed of Abraham indefinitely; but God soon made express exceptions. He expressly excepted Ishmael and his lineal descendants; and the sons of Keturah, and their descendants. He expressly excepted Esau, and his descendants. He expressly excepted the rebellious thousands, who, in the day of provocation and of temptation in the wilderness, openly refused to have him for their God. And he has ex-

* Dr. Gill concedes, Reply to Clark, page 14, that "baptism was administered to Simon Magus in the pure primitive way, by an apostolic person, yet he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." At the same time he says, page 9. "A dedication ought to be previous to baptism. And believers must first give themselves to the Lord, and then are baptized, in his name." If Simon Magus was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, he was not a real believer. He had not given himself to the Lord. He must have been baptized, because he *appeared* to have done so. Then, to proceed upon the ground of a visibility which is sometimes founded in mistake, is to act in a pure and apostolic way. I cannot think any person will be disposed to deny the justness of this distinction.

pressly excepted the multitudes who have now a vail upon their hearts. They are broken off, and not to be counted for the seed till they are grafted in again.—Then, "all Israel," i.e. the *true Israel*, the *seed* "shall be saved." The primitive law of the covenant, comprehensive of all other laws pertaining to visible subjection, in the execution of which divine exception was testified, is this, Genesis, xvii. 14. "And the uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul *shall be cut off* from his people; he hath broken my covenant." The *unpermitted* neglect of circumcision, even though it was the parent's fault only, determined that the child should no longer be counted and treated as of the seed. The reason is obvious. The visibility of the infant, as one of the seed, stood, by divine appointment, in inseparable connexion with the visibility of the parent. If the parent refused to circumcise his child as God had appointed, he divested himself of the visibility of being one of his people. He wilfully trampled upon the covenant. He trampled upon God's authority, and thereby disowned him from being his God. Romans ii. 25.—"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made unsircumcision." He excluded his child with himself. The parent and the infant offspring were constitutionally united; because, the seed came on, from generation to generation, by natural descent. The infant child was to be counted for the seed till the neglect of circumcision; not afterwards. He was visibly of the seed, and a subject of the covenant, *by birth*. Hence God says, Ezekiel xvi. 20. "Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou hast *born unto me*, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children?"

It is not the least objection to this idea, that the infant was incapable of *consenting* to the covenant, and was wholly passive in circumcision. That the infant was wholly passive, in becoming a visible subject of the

covenant, is implied in this very passage in Ezekiel. It was *born to God*. Its initial covenant state was understood to take place passively. The infant was covenanted *about*. The whole seed was; Christ himself was, as the great high priest, the representative of the seed, their elder brother. In this sense only the infant was a covenantee. And the real seed were covenantees in this sense, as covenanted *about*, interminably; as much after a personal consent, as before it; and as much before it, as after it. Consent did not interest in the covenant. It will be remembered the promise was *absolute*. It was the promise only which interested. The consent of the subject was but the execution of the promise. If consent were the thing which interested, then a personal profession would have been necessary to constitute a visible standing in the covenant. But as it was not, an infant might have as complete a visible standing in the covenant as the adult.* It is a mistake which has led to very erroneous conclusions, to suppose that visibility of covenant standing rests upon one uniform principle. It may have different grounds. It may take place by the appointment and testimony of God, as well as by personal consent. If God have put his hand upon an infant to bless it, and thereby have let us know that it is a subject of his kingdom, it must be daring impiety in us to deny its covenant standing.

Neither is it any objection, that the visible covenant standing of the infant must be *different* from that of the consenting adult, who gives evidence that he is really sanctified. For, though a consenting adult, like Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, appears to me actually to possess, what I have not *equal* evidence that the

* If there be any difficulty in considering the infant seed as embraced in the covenant, or *in* covenant, it lies as much against the scheme of the antipœdobaptists, as against that which considers the covenant of circumcision as wholly of a gracious nature. They allow that the land of Canaan was promised to the posterity of Abraham as such. But it is of no consequence, as to the question of an infant's being a covenantee, what the covenant engages to perform, whether to bestow an *earthly* or an *heavenly* inheritance, whether it have respect to politic al or spiritual objects. The simple question is, whether an infant be capable of being made a subject of a *promise*: Or whether a promise may be made to a parent that he shall have a child who shall possess any kind of good?

infant possesses, I have as *real* evidence that the infant is a subject of covenant promise, as I have that the adult is. In the case of the adult, the ground of the conclusion may be more extended, and the conclusion itself more certain; just as the evidence respecting one adult visible believer, is far more convincing than that respecting another; but, in the case of the infant, the evidence, or the ground of estimate is as *real*. In both cases the ground of evidence is the divine testimony; i. e. God tells us by what marks we shall estimate a person to be one of his kingdom, or a subject of *promise*.

To return, the covenant must be kept. It must be kept by the careful observance of *infant* circumcision as the appointed token of it. To have substituted *adult* circumcision exclusively, in the room of *infant* circumcision, or to have deferred circumcision till the child should come to years of discretion, in order that it might embrace or reject the covenant, and be circumcised or not, accordingly, would have been a departure, not only from the *law*, but *from the design* and *spirit* of the promise. Circumcision would then have lost its most important meaning, as a token. It would have implicitly turned the promise into a conditional thing, and virtually vacated it. So indispensable was *infant* circumcision.* Let it be carefully noticed by the reader, that I have qualified the term *neglect* by *unpermitted*. God has a right to dispense with his own laws. He has done so on many occasions. The neglect of circumcision was permitted to the Israelites while they were prosecuting the tedious journeyings of the wilderness. Neglect, which is not of the nature of *disobedience*, but of *duty*, cannot be a breach of covenant. Neglect, which *is* of the nature of disobedience, is such a breach of covenant, as nothing but

* "And the male child that was not circumcised on the *eighth* day, was to be cut off from his people, as having broken the covenant, (for these words, *on the eighth day*, should be inserted in the 14th verse; and the verse read thus. *The uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised*, on the eighth day, *that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant*; as appears from the Samaritan text, the Greek and Samaritan versions, and the citations of Philo, Justin, and Origen." Hallet's Notes, Vol. III. page 276.

repentance, and that on the ground of an atonement, can repair.

As the reason why an unpermitted neglect of infant circumcision separated from the visible seed, was, *that it broke the covenant*, it is evident, that a breach of the covenant, let it consist in what it might, was a reason, in law, why a person should no longer be counted for the seed. That which was a reason in one case, would certainly be in another. In the nature of things, if a man openly reject the covenant, he can no longer be considered as a subject of it. This idea is established by the whole current of scripture. The covenant promises made to Abraham proceeded originally upon this given principle, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that God may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." The covenant, as expressed in the 17th of Genesis, is thus introduced. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Circumcision must be attended with allegiance, otherways it becomes uncircumcision. St. Paul observes, Romans iii. 25. "Circumcision verily profiteth, *if* thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Obedience then, just as it is now under the Gospel, was the condition of continuing *visibly* in the covenant: I say *continuing*; it was not the condition of being established in it *initially*. Accordingly, in successive periods, when any part of nominal Israel were openly rejected, it was because they had *despised the covenant*. All imperfections were borne with, so long as the covenant was not despised. This was done by open idolatry, and such other acts of disobedience, as amounted to a refusal to have God for their God. The Psalmist, Psalm, 78, detailing the dealings of God with the refractory part of Israel, assigns, as a general reason of the judgments which fell upon them, "For their heart was not right with him, nor *were they stedfast in his covenant*."

The numerous denunciations of the Mosaic and the prophetic law, provided for the exslusion of all, who, by personal disobedience, rejected the covenant; and, whether executed or not, whom God would have, and whom he would not have, counted for the seed.

Having thus clearly determined whom we are to understand to be the seed, really and visibly, there will be no difficulty in ascertaining what we are to understand to be intended by the *covenant*, mentioned in this article; the *establishing* of this covenant; and its *duration*, expressed by the term *everlasting*. The term *covenant* has its own explanation in the promise itself, "to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." In this covenant, God engaged, that in the highest sense, and by a relation as spiritual, and unalterable, as that which subsisted between God and Abraham, he would be the God of his *seed*, their shield, and exceeding great reward. This is so clear as to be beyond dispute.—Nothing but partiality to a favorite theory can lead any one to attach a different idea to the declaration.

Equally evident is it, what is to be understood by the promise, to *establish* this covenant with Abraham, and his seed, throughout their generations. The plain import of the engagement is, like what has been just observed, that the covenant should not only be proposed, but take a full effect with respect to the *seed*, as it had taken effect with respect to *Abraham*. Therefore it secured the continuance of a seed, in successive generations, with whom the covenant should be established.—This is so obviously the import of the declaration, that ingenuity could scarce find out a different meaning to apply to it. This construction of the promise is agreeable to fact, and is confirmed by the current of the scriptures, especially by a question which the apostle Paul puts, in the beginning of the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and the reply which he makes to it. "I say then, hath God cast away his people whom he foreknew? God forbid." This answer clearly supposes, as an undoubted fact, that there is a per-

petual succession of the seed, called the people of God, with respect to whom the promise has its full effect.

Finally, it is easy to see what we are to understand to be the meaning of the word *everlasting*, as qualifying this covenant, with regard to its duration, Beyond a doubt it is used to convey the idea of its *endless continuance*. This is evident; because the literal meaning is the most natural, and by far the most agreeable to the spirit, of the covenant; because, on the supposition the term had a limited meaning, the covenant might have been of very short duration; and then Abraham would have had every thing to fear; whereas he is commanded, not to fear. "*Fear not*, for I am your shield and your exceeding great reward;" because this covenant, as explained by Christ, secured a resurrection from the dead and eternal glory; Matth. xxii. 31. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying; I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" because otherways, i. e. if he had not prepared a city, a *continuing* city, God would have been ashamed to be called *their God*, Heb. xi. 16; and because the promise is expressly said, Heb. ix. 15, to have had respect to an, "*eternal inheritance.*"

To suppose that the covenant is of temporary duration, is to sink its glory to nothing. It is to suppose God has ceased, or will cease to be the God of Abraham and his seed; that the connexion between Christ, and his adherents will be dissolved; and that the provisions, encouragements, promises and interpositions of grace, mentioned in the scriptures, as eminently illustrating the excellency of Jehovah's character, have ultimate respect to perishable objects; and are therefore little more entitled to notice, than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

By this covenant then God united himself eternally to *Abraham*, and his *seed*, as *their God;* and they were taken into a peculiar, spiritual, and indissolvable con-

nexion with him as his people; the seed being placed in regard to covenant relation and security, even though they did not now exist, upon the same ground that Abraham himself stood upon.

One article more is to be attended to, before the analysis of the covenant of circumcision can be considered as completed. This is, that it made provision for the *adoption of others*, who were not of the seed by natural descent. I shall not here dwell largely upon this idea. It will come into view with more advantage in a subsequent stage of this Treatise. A few things however in this connexion claim to be noticed.

The child by descent, is a child according to the primitive literal meaning of the term. The child by adoption, is such figuratively. The adopted son, may, however, be as paternally regarded, and share as fully the privileges of the family, as the natural son.

The doctrine of adoption, into the family of Abraham, runs through the Old Testament, and the New. It is very clearly intimated in the Abrahamic covenant itself. "*I will bless him* that blesseth thee." He who blesses Abraham, is a friend of Abraham, in the light in which he is exhibited in the covenant; is a possessor of the faith, and a worshipper of the God of Abraham. His language is that of the pious Moabitess, Ruth. "Where thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." He is of course united with Abraham, in a participation of the blessings of the same covenant. He is equally an object of promise. This doctrine is again intimated, or rather clearly expressed in another promise of the covenant, "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Here *the blessing* is extended beyond the boundaries of Abraham's natural seed. But it is extended, in Abraham, i. e. by the Messiah, his *seed*. It takes effect by faith. By faith Gentiles become joint heirs of the eternal inheritance; or are blessed with faithful Abraham. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The doctrine of adoption then was wrought into the

covenant as an essential part of it. The covenant taught the seed, that they were to multiply into a great nation, not in the natural course of propagation only; but by accessions, from time to time, of converts from the other inhabitants of the world. They were accordingly to spread their arms, to receive these converts, with the most affectionate cordiality. The gates of their city were not at all to be shut.* For they were to expect that the glory, and the honor of the nations should be brought into it. Being received, these converts were to be treated as *brethren*. "One is your master, even Christ, and *all ye* are *brethren*."

The doctrine of adoption seems to be taught, in the order for applying circumcision to all who composed the family; *those who were born in the house, and those who were bought with money*. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money, *any stranger which is not of thy seed*—and my covenant shall be *in your flesh* for an everlasting covenant." In obedience to this direction, we are told, that, "Abraham, took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men, of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, the selfsame day, as God had said unto him." This appointment was to extend through their successive generations; and circumcision was to be the covenant of God in their flesh. All the reasons for this application, we may not be able indisputably to ascertain. But so much is evident; that circumcision, when applied to the stranger that was not of the seed, signified the same thing, exactly, that it did when applied to the seed. It was a token, sign, or seal of the covenant generally; of *all* the promises of it; of those which respected the diffusion of the blessing beyond the limits of the seed, as well as of those which were appropriate to the seed; and certified, that God would be the God of the former, in the same sense and to the same extent that he engaged to be the God of the latter. The promises

* Rev. xxi. 25.

were a *common interest.* Hence, the Apostle, Heb. vi. 11, 12, says; "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, *inherit the promises.*" Could it be ascertained, conclusively, that Abraham's servants were visibly godly persons, and that circumcision was applied to them on this principle, it would be a settled point, that here was the doctrine of adoption reduced to practice. Some reasons which would induce us to form this conclusion, rather than an opposite one, we shall take the liberty to mention. God himself testified to Abraham's fidelity in instructing and governing his household; and expressly connected, by a gracious constitution, their piety with his fidelity. "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and *his household* after him, and *they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,* that God may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Ought it not to be presumed, that this constitution produced the effect, expressly designated? Were the means secured? Were they designed for the very purpose of forming to faith and piety, Abraham's household; and yet were they so ineffectual, as not to gain them even to a visible subjection to the true God, and a visible acceptation of the covenant? When Melchizedek gave the blessing to Abraham, had this blessing no respect to the family, of which Abraham was the head, and whose eternal welfare he was so engaged to promote? Was it promised, "I will bless them that bless thee;" and yet were his own family, who were attached to him, and who followed him through all perils as their common leader, under the curse, both really and visibly? Was not Abraham probably as strict with respect to the religious character of his household, as any of his seed? Yet one of them says, Psalm cxxxix. 19. "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God, therefore *depart from me,* ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.—

Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee; and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." He prays, Psalm cxliv. 11. "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood." He resolves, Psalm ci. "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: *I will not know a wicked person.*—He that walketh in a perfect way, he *shall serve me*: *He* that worketh deceit *shall not dwell within my house:* He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." If we are to take these declarations as illustrating the testimony of God, respecting the fidelity of Abraham, can we imagine, there was an entire visible contrast between his religious state and that of his household?

That servants, were, according to the economy of the covenant, understood to be united with their master, in religious allegiance to God, seems to have proof in the conduct of Jacob towards his servants, when he was passing from Padan-aram to Bethel. His confidence which he expreses to Laban, that none of his Gods had been taken by his wives, children, or servants; presents the presumption, that he had taken care to extirpate idolatry, and to lead them to the acknowledgment and worship of Jehovah. Gen. xxxi. 32. "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live; before *our brethren*, discern thou what is with me, and take it to thee; for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them." Sometime afterward, when Jacob had got near to Bethel, and he had received directions from God to go to Bethel, and dwell there; suspecting; or, if you choose, knowing, that the conquest of the Shechemites had brought some of their gods, and considerable spoil into his household, he undertakes to purge it entirely of the accursed thing." Gen. xxxv. 2, 3, 4. "Then Jacob said unto his houshold, and to

all that were with him, put away the strange Gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange Gods which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." We cannot tell how far this introduction of idolatry had gained ground, or whether in fact here was any thing more than spoil. For that his followers any of them worshipped these gods, is not said. Here, however was a thorough cleansing. The objects of idolatrous worship were put away, even as dangerous spoil. Jacob's servants submitted to external ablution, as a symbol of internal dedication to God; and changed their garments, as a sign of devoting themselves to his service. But why all this, if the covenant of circumcision tolerated idolatry, and its attendant impieties, in the family of Abraham?

Those who contend that God's covenant transactions with Abraham, admitted, that subjects of visible impiety and idolatry, should be incorporated into his family, and be honored with the seal of the righteousness of faith; must admit also, that these covenant transactions made provision for the very thing, which they were designed to counteract and extirpate. The separation of Abraham and his seed, had the special design of preserving them from the idolatries of the world, and forming them into a society of worshippers of the true God. The holy nature of the covenant, and the subsequent laws which were given to this society, bound them, by most solemn sanctions, to avoid all connexion with idolaters. A passage, in the 34th chapter of Exodus, claims here to be particularly noticed. "Observe thou that which I command thee this day. Behold I drive out before thee, the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebuzite. Take to heed thyself lest thou

make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of of thee. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. For thou shalt worship no other God. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice. And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons; and they go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons to go a whoring after their gods." Abraham was undoubtedly required to be as cautious, and as pure, in this respect as his descendants were. God was as jealous with respect to him, as with respect to them. Accordingly, what notices we have respecting the character of the servants of Abraham, are clearly in favor of their visible union with Abraham, in religious faith and worship. If the evidence be not conclusive, so far as it goes, it confirms the doctrine of adoption.

A case very expressly to this point of adoption, is found in the 12th chapter of Exodus, at the 48th verse. "And when a *stranger* shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover *to the Lord*, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and *he shall be as one that is born in the land;* for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. *One law* shall be to him that is *home born*, and to the *stranger* that sojourneth among you." No words could more fully warrant the adoption of proselytes, or more fully certify their equal interest in the covenant. Another passage, very express to this purpose, occurs in Isaiah lvi. 3, and on. "Neither let *the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord*, speak, saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; neither let the Eunuch say, behold I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the Eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and *take hold of my covenant*, even unto them will I give *in mine house*, and *within my walls*, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting

name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that *join themselves to the Lord to serve him*, and to *love the name of the Lord*, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and *taketh hold of my covenant*, even them will I bring to *my holy mountain*, and make them joyful *in my house of prayer*; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer, *for all people*." After so full and explicit a testimony, all farther proof must be superfluous. The hundreds of gracious promises which run through the prophecies, respecting the ingathering of the Gentiles to Zion, are, as will be seen in the sequel, illustrative of this idea.

Here let it be carefully noticed; that all these proselytes, who entered into the covenant by adoption, were required expressly, not only to be circumcised themselves, but to cause their *male children* to be circumcised. They must conform exactly to what was enjoined upon the natural seed. They must circumcise *their male infants* at eight days old. For there was one law to him that was *home born*, and to the *stranger*. "Let *all his males*, be circumcised." This was agreeable to the command given to Abraham. He was as careful to circumcise the *infant children* of his servants, as the servants themselves. Whether we can discern the reason or not, this was *law*, and this was *fact*. But the general reasons seem obvious.

1. It has ever been the manner of God's proceeding, to identify children with the parent, in the unity of a household state. Thus Noah was directed to prepare an ark for the saving of himself, and *his house*. The children of Lot were associated with him under one peculiarly merciful dispensation, by which they were rescued from the destruction of Sodom. Abraham and his *house* were connected by covenant alliance. When Zaccheus was converted, our Lord declared, "This day is salvation come to this *house*." When the disciples were sent abroad to preach the kingdom of God, they were directed to say, upon their entering a house,

"Peace be to *this house.*" And were told "that if the Son of Peace were there, their peace should rest upon it." Peter said to the trembling jailor, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy *house.* Cornelius was told, that Peter should tell him words, whereby he, and his *house* should live. It is one of the Proverbs of Solomon, that "the *house* of the righteous shall stand:" And another, that "the curse of the Lord is in the *house* of the wicked."

This provision is founded in perfect wisdom; nay, in the necessity of the case. Marriage was instituted for the propagation of a godly seed, and the family alliance which it establishes, was designed to carry on this purpose to its ultimate issue. Unity of religious character is understood as the principle of this alliance. Upon an opposite principle, the unity of the family state is dissolved. For "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Children, by the circumstance of their dependance, come naturally, and almost necessarily into the lot of their parents, and partake of their religious privileges or deprivations. They are led to join in their worship of God; or to participate in their idolatry. Even the Baptists themselves are constrained to act upon this principle. They require the attendance of their children in acts of family worship; and carry them up, as parts of themselves, to the sanctuary, in which God's worship is publicly celebrated.

2. The children of those who were of the adoption were *born to God*, in a sense which did not apply at all to the carnal world. They were as really born to God, as the natural descendants of Abraham. For their parents were subjects of the same faith; were equally *servants* of God; and in the same covenant. The one sort of parents devoted their children to God, in the same manner, that the other sort of parents did. If there was one law to the stranger, and to him that was home born; that law had the same foundation with respect to the one, that it had with respect to the other. God was related to both alike as *their God.* The whole family, was by birth, in a state of religious unity.

3. Here, in this one general family, the *seed*, not only according to the literal, but the figurative meaning of that term, was to be found, as one generation succeeded another. Proselytes were indeed to come *originally* from the idolatrous world. But the blessing which rested upon those proselytes, was the blessing of Abraham, which passed over to his offspring. He was blessed, in having a seed given to him, to whom Jehovah was a God. And sincere proselytes were heirs *according to the promise*. They were blessed with faithful Abraham. They partook of the root and fatness of the tree. They were the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them*.—The blessing had a lineal or seminal descent, as well with respect to them, as the home born. I do not mean that the infant offspring of proselytes were *the seed* primarily intended in that particular clause of the covenant, "I will establish my covenant with *thy seed*." This would be to contradict all that has been said. But, as the promise, "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," did not respect one generation only, but every generation, the blessing involved in it was to be transmitted in a family way, or by family descent; and by means of those instructions, and that discipline, which the covenant furnished and required. So that the infant offspring of the stranger, just like the other, though upon a different principle, were to be accounted *holy*, *the Lord's*, and joint heirs with the offspring of the natural seed, of the heavenly inheritance. The profit of circumcision extended to the one sort of offspring as really as to the other.—Hence the manner in which benedictions thoughout the scriptures embrace *the children* of all pious parents, connectively with parents themselves. Deuteronomy, xxx. 19. "Therefore choose life, that both thou and *thy seed* may live." Ibid xxviii. 4. "Blessed shall be *the fruit of thy body*." Ib. vii. 13, "And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee, he will also bless the *fruit of thy womb*."—Ib. xxx. 6. "And the Lord thy God shall circum-

cise thine heart, and the heart *of thy seed.*" Psalm xxv. 13. "His soul shall dwell at ease, and *his seed* shall inherit the earth." These several promises had an application to proselytes, as much as to the home born. For they were equally of the body. Psalm cxii. 1, 2. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments: His *seed* shall be mighty upon the earth; *the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" Psalm xxxvii. 26. "He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his *seed* is blessed." Proverbs xi. 21. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the *seed* of the righteous shall be delivered." Isaiah xliv. 3.— "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon *thy seed*, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Ib. lxi. 9. "And their *seed* shall be known among the Gentiles, and their *offspring* among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the *seed* which the Lord hath blessed."

These declarations, as has been shewn with respect to the term seed, are to be understood, not as securing the salvation of all, individually, of the offspring of the adoption; but as announcing the descent of the blessing, and the descent of it in this way, that is, *seminally.*

These promises certainly involve a connexion between the piety of the parent and the piety and salvation of his child; or that the blessing descends seminally throughout the whole Church. If there be no such connexion, then these promises are without meaning. They secure nothing. They convey no blessing like that, which, in terms, they express. There is an essential disparity between the covenant state of the natural, and the adoptive seed. The grand reason for the application of circumcision with respect to the one, has no application to the other.

This theory will have a full confirmation, when we come to see how Jews and Gentiles are consolidated, without any distinction, into one body, at the period, when the Messiah *orders* and *establishes* his kingdom forever.

The view of the covenant of circumcision which has now been taken, presents a number of important conclusions, which, because they will farther illustrate the general subject in hand, will here be noticed.

1. It is plainly a gross pervertion of the leading promise of the covenant of circumcision, when it is treated, as it often is, as meaning no more than that God would unite himself to the posterity of Abraham as a temporal sovereign; to govern them as to their worldly state, and to bestow on them temporal rewards, upon mere external obedience.* This idea will be more largely considered and refuted, when we come to examine the Sinai covenant. Here let it be only observed, that not a word of this nature is suggested in all God's covenant transactions with Abraham; but every thing, as we have seen, has a contrary appearance. The preceding analysis has shewn, that God was the God of Abraham in the most gracious and spiritual sense. He was his *exceeding great reward;* not upon the low ground of a civil compact, which involves no moral rectitude; nor upon the scale of mere temporal prosperity, which involves no blessing; but upon the principle of distinguishing and everlasting mercy. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is Jehovah's memorial throughout all generations. And he is not the God of the *dead*, but of the living. If Jehovah be the God of Isaac and Jacob, not as dead and reprobate men, but as eternally living in his favor; without all doubt he is a God in the same sense to the residue of Abraham's seed. The covenant relation is exactly the same with respect to all. Nothing then can be more derogatory to God than such a construction of the Abrahamic covenant. It sinks him down to a level with the miserable kings of the earth. It sup-

* "It is exceedingly evident that the Abrahamic covenant respected and promised blessings to Abraham's posterity, or natural descendants as such.—Those blessings however, were of a mere temporal kind." Andrews's Vindication of the Baptists, page 24. "It is an undoubted truth, that God was the God of the posterity of Abraham in the very sense in which he promised to be. It will not be denied that God was the God of the Jewish Nation, in the most literal sense. He was their *political lawgiver and king*," pages 43 and 44.

though it may have a *mean*, can be suspended upon no *condition* whatever. The seed was the election.—The most perfect faithfulness with respect to all others, would of course be wholly ineffectual. Probably Isaac was as faithful to Esau, as to Jacob. Aaron, for aught that appears, was as faithful to Nadab and Abihu, as to Eleazer and Ithamar. David was probably as faithful to Absalom as to Solomon. Circumcision was not therefore administered upon the ground of such an infallible universal connexion.

5. It is plain from the foregoing premises, that the covenant of circumcision was the basis of a society, and such a kind of society as there was nothing like it in all the world. It was a society, which embraced the heirs of the eternal inheritance. It was a society which, as to its descriptive character, consisted of the *seed* which was the blessed of the Lord. It was appropriated by Jehovah, as, *his family*, *his inheritance*, *his portion*. Those who composed it were his people, and he was their God. They were under his special government and care as *his*; as those whom all the promises of his covenat respected. Christ was united to this society as its saviour. Its institutions and laws were holy. Its character was holy. Its relations and interests were holy. In a moral view therefore it was the contrast of all institutions among men, merely national and civil. There was not, indeed, a vestige of any thing national, or civil belonging to it; according to the common import of those terms, as signifying combinations and laws, of a mere worldly design. The society was not a kingdom of *the earth*; but the kingdom of *heaven*.

6. It is evident, that this society, formed by the covenant of circumcision, and of which this covenant was the constitutional basis, was *indissolvable*. It was to last *forever*. Whether the members of it should be in heaven or upon earth; whether it should occupy, as its place of rest, Egypt, or the Wilderness, or Canaan, or the territories of the Gentiles; whether it should have one modification, or another; be under *this* dispen-

sation, or *that;* it was to be of interminable duration. The covenant is declared to be *everlasting*. The establisher of it is the *living* God. The promises of this covenant respect a *redeemed seed;* and they are redeemed in such a high and exalted sense, as that they are made unto God, kings and priests *forever*.

7. It is evident that the infant offspring of those adults who belonged to this society, whether in the line of the natural posterity of Abraham, or of the adoption, were members of it. They were so *by birth*; and as completely members then, as when they became adults. They were the seed constituting the society; and whom the promises of the covenant respected. Hence the fact, which is so uncontrovertible as not to be denied by any denomination of Christians, that the infants of Israel were considered and treated as compleatly members of the body. With their parents, they came under all the collective epithets, which designated the society.

8. It is evident from the foregoing view of the covenant state of the seed, that those who died in their infancy, not having been excepted from the body of the *seed* by any express testimony, or in the execution of the laws of the covenant, were to be considered as *saved*. None will deny this, who do not deny the possibility of the salvation of infants altogether. But surely they are as capable of salvation, as of being made subjects of promise. And their being subjects of an unconditional gracious promise, concludes in favor of their being considered heirs of the inheritance. The kingdom is in heaven as well as upon earth. Death therefore does not dismember from it. This was a very important part of the blessing secured in the covenant, and made a wide difference, between the covenanted people of God, and the heathen world. On account of this difference, the heathen are called by Paul, Ephesians ii. 12. "ξένοι των διαθηκων τῆς επαγγελίας," strangers from the covenants of promise; and are said to be without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world.

9. It is evident from the illustrations which have been brought into view respecting the seed, that individual descendants from Abraham could be deprived of the blessings of the covenant, or fail of having God, for their God, in the strict sense of the promise, but *in one way*; i. e. *by refusing the covenant alliance.* I do not now speak of the divine sovereignty, which is the cause why one is taken and the other left; but of the part which man acts as a moral agent. The external administration of the covenant, involved a proposal on the part of God, to be the God of all to whom it was addressed. This was another point of great difference between the posterity of Abraham, and the rest of the world. This proposition has never been made to mankind, universally. It has been made in connexion with the preservation and promulgation of the covenant only.—The way, and the only way, then, by which individuals lived and died, without any interest in the blessings of the covenant, was *unbelief.* Hence those who were chargeable with unbelief, were openly cut off from the covenant.

10. It is evident, that if the covenant of circumcision, be altogether of a gracious nature, as it has been largely shewn that it is, then the dutiful observance of the ordinance of circumcision, by the adult, must have been understood to be an *act of faith.* Circumcision was a token of *promise.* The promise was embraced by faith only. The application of the token then, when dutifully applied, was an act of faith. It was of course, *believer's*, and not *unbeliever's circumcision.* Yet,

11. It evidently appears from the view which has been taken of the covenant, that actual faith was by no means an essential qualification in the *subject* of circumcision.* It was a requisite, respecting the adult proselyte; but not at all respecting the *seed.* Their passivity in circumcision, and as subjects of the covenant initially,

* "The most plausible agrument against the baptism of infants, has been founded on this principle, viz, *that actual faith is a necessary qualification for that ordinance.* This argument is the dernier resort of the antipœdobaptists, and the whole weight of their cause rests and depends upon it."

Amzi Lewis.

was understood, because they were only covenanted *about*.

12. We are shewn in these illustrations the reason why the term circumcision is so often used in the scriptures, as characterising and designating the people of God, in distinction from the world. Romans iii. 10. "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith," &c. Philippians iii. 3. "For we are *the circumcision*, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh." The reason is, that circumcision was a seal of the absolute promises of the covenant, and designated the seed, to whom it was applied, as visible subjects of these promises. This is the evident reason also, why circumcision is so often mentioned as representing internal sanctification. The seed whom the promise embraced were really sanctified. Circumcision was expressive of their being so. The peculiar nature, time, and circumstances of the ordinance, all concurred to make this expression in the most perfect manner.*

13. To the common question, (expressive either of ignorance or unbelief,) what good could it do to circumcise an *infant child*, who in the act must have been altogether passive? We have the very best answer.—Circumcision, when applied to the infant, much more clearly expressed the nature of the covenant, than when applied to the adult proselyte. The covenant, in all the promises of it, had respect to blessings which were to take place by *descent*. It respected *a seed* naturally, and adoptatively. Circumcision, therefore, when applied to infants, was attached to the very subjects on which the promise terminated. The language of it was precisely that of the covenant, *that the seed was blessed*. It marked the subjects as belonging to God, by a most gracious covenant relation. It was the grand

* "The time of performing this rite, was on the eighth day, because it was not till then, sufficiently *cleansed* from the impurities of its birth; nor was the mother past her greatest pollution, and consequently, could not touch it without rendering it *unclean*.—That member which is the instrument of generation, was made choice of, that they might be *an holy seed*, consecrated unto God from the *beginning*." *Lewis's Hebrew Republick.*

public seal of the charter, not merely of their temporal, but of their eternal inheritance. It was especially such as applied to the seed in their *infancy*. Had it been deferred to adult years, its peculiar meaning would have been lost. Accordingly, to the question, What profit is there in circumcision? The apostle answers, "*much every way*; chiefly, because, that unto them were committed the oracles of God." They had the word of *promise*. This involved the security of the salvation of the seed, embraced in the promise. What impiety then, to treat with disrespect, as a burdensome, unmeaning, carnal ceremony, an institution, the language of which is so infinitely gracious; and which is of such solemn consideration in the account of God!

14. It is evident, from the view which has been taken of the covenant of circumcision, that it made provision for, and was to be carried into effect by means of, a strictly pious education. It was to be established with the *seed* in their generations. The blessing was to go down the lapse of time, in a succession of pious recipients. These recipients were to become pious, and inherit the promises, through the instrumentality of instruction. For, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. God accomplishes all his purposes of grace by means. These means are to be used with diligence; and, as they are covenant means, and given for the express purpose of being channels, by which the blessing is to flow down from generation to generation, this diligence has every possible encouragement, short of being universally effectual. As a general principle, it is designed to be effectual, in proportion to the fidelity exercised, in teaching and governing, persuading and praying for. This is clearly exhibited in the testimony of God respecting Abraham, which we have had occasion before to introduce. "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that God may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him." Accordingly, Moses, to subserve

the execution of the promises of the covenant, directs the children of Israel, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In agreement with which the Psalmist observes, Psalm lxxviii. 5. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, *that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise, and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God.*"

15. From the preceding analysis of the Abrahamic covenant, it is evident, that this covenant made provision for, and required a strict discipline. If the uncircumcised manchild was to be cut off from his people, and the visible seed was to be holy, and distinguished as such, from those who were subjects of divine exception, and from the uncovenanted world, in the execution of covenant law; then here was established, as an essential part of covenant duty, a strict, impartial, and constant discipline.

16. From what has been said, it is evident, that the females in Israel were as really subjects of the covenant as the males; and that circumcision signified exactly the same thing with respect to them, that it did with respect to the males. For they were equally with the males, *the seed.* It was the seed, as a mystical or spiritual society, rather than the individual, though the individual was comprehended, to whom circumcision sealed the promises of the covenant. The objection then to the graciousness of the Abrahamic covenant, that it made no provision for the blessing to rest upon females, is entirely groundless.

17. It is an obvious conclusion from the preceding illustrations, and a conclusion which needs to be remembered, because the opposite idea is most generally advanced in treatises on this subject, that circumcis-

ion did not *initiate*. It did not place the subject in covenant; but was administered, because he was in covenant already. He was so by birth. Nay, he was comprehended in the covenant before he existed.

18. And finally, we are presented with an admirable display of the wisdom of God, in the economy of the covenant. If God had given no absolute promise, respecting a seed, there would have been no certainty of the appearance of a Savior, that a church would have been perpetually preserved in the world; or even that one soul would be saved. If his promise had extended to all the natural, or the adoptive posterity, individually, and without exception, it would have operated to countenance licentiousness, like the absurd, and antigovernmental doctrine, of the final salvation of all men. Had there been no really sanctified seed in succession, God would have appeared as the God of a race of hypocrites only. And had the invisible and the visible seed been exactly the same persons, the judgment day would have been anticipated.

We conclude, then, this analysis of the covenant, in the adoring language of the apostle. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever. *Amen.*"

## CHAPTER V.

*Exhibiting a general view of the Community of Israel, from the administration of the Covenant of Circumcision, to that of the Covenant of Sinai.*

IN the preceding analysis, we have ascertained the exclusively gracious nature of the covenant, established by God with Abraham; the unconditionality of its promises; the extent of their application; and its perpetuity.

We have found it the basis of an organized, and indissoluble society, compposed of persons who are visibly objects of the blessing. We are thence, naturally led to anticipate a series of expressions of divine care, especially directed to the conservation and elevation of this society; miraculous displays of God's power; special revelations of his will; and assurances of his favor. We are led to expect the promulgation of institutions and laws, forming an interior regimen, adapted to the peculiar nature of the society, and the glorious objects to which it is to be ultimately advanced.

It will be seen that facts justify this expectation.—The covenant we find carried into effect in the birth of Isaac; in his circumcision; in his evident personal piety; and in the extraordinary manner in which he was made a typical representative of the Savior, when Abraham virtually offered him upon the altar. The blessings of the covenant appeared to rest upon this Patriarch, in the repeated assurances he had from God, that he was an object of his special love; in the protraction of his life to a very old age; in his closing his days in peace; and having his burial in the land which the covenant gave to him.

From him, the covenant, with its blessings, was transmitted to Jacob. God avowed himself *his* God,

by the same gracious and indissoluble bonds by which he was the God of his fathers, Abraham, and Isaac.—Jacob had power with God, and prevailed. He carefully applied the token of the covenant to all his children; taught them to fear and serve God, and went before them in a pious example. His valedictory blessings had the efficacy of prophecy. He expired under the weight of years, upon the bosom of an affectionate Joseph, and his bones were carried up, in solemn pomp, and buried by the bones of his fathers, in the land of promise. His children, the heads of the tribes, succeeded in the same relation to God, and were visibly recipients of the blessing. In character, they were by no means faultless. In some instances, their conduct was cruel. Still they adhered to the worship of God, and were distinguished from the idolatrous world as his people.

Joseph was certainly a person of singular piety.—His resistance of a potent temptation; his adherence to true religion in an idolatrous and profligate court; his filial duty; his readiness to forgive his brethren; and his great and persevering kindness to them, in opposition to all the natural dictates of pride and resentment, are decisive proofs of it.

By an extraordinary series of events, the prediction addressed to Abraham, respecting the subjection of his seed to the oppressions of a relentless government, was fulfilled. This did not express the discontinuance of covenant favor. Though the Egyptian monarch reduced them to slaves, and extended over them a most cruel despotism, their increase was not retarded. For we are told, Exodus, i. 12. "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." The blessings of the covenant signally attended them, to counteract the designs of their oppressors; and to prepare the way for a triumph over them, in their final deliverance.

When God interposes to accomplish this, he does it, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in remembrance of his covenant; and he speaks of these

their descendants, as *his people*. Exodus, iii. 6, 7, 8. "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of *my people*, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of their land to a good land, &c." Moses, exactly according to the tenor of the covenant, is directed to speak to Pharaoh, of God, as appropriately the God of the Hebrews; and to say, "Let us go, we beseech thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to *the Lord our God*."

Language, indicating the same covenant union, is again put into the mouth of Moses, Exodus iv. 22, 23.. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, *Israel is my Son;* even my first born. And I say unto thee, let *my Son* go, that he may serve me." This appropriate language is used throughout the whole of that intercourse, between God and Moses, and between Moses and Pharaoh, which respects the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Very remarkable was the distinction made betwen Israel and the idolatrous inhabitants of Egypt, during the course of those terrible judgments which, preceded the exodus. While the whole Country, inhabited by the native Egyptians, was overspread with calamity, the adjoining territory, possessed by Israel, entirely escaped. The exemption of their firstborn from death, through the efficacy of the blood of the pachal lamb, when the firstborn of Egypt universally perished, was manifestative of distinguishing covenant grace. So was the manner, in which Israel, were directed to spoil the Egyptians. And so, especially, was their miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea, when the hosts of Pharaoh were drowned.

God's treatment of Israel at this time, had the character of grace, as distinguishably, as has been his treatment of Christians at any period under the New Tes-

tament dispensation. It indicated a relation to him entirely spiritual, and was therefore in perfect agreement with the view which has been given, in the preceding analysis, of the covenant of circumcision.

The triumph of Israel, after the passage of the Red Sea, was one, among the many triumphs, of the people of God. The song which they sung, was in the strain of evangelical piety; and, like all the doxologies of the Church, partook of the hosannas of heaven, where the song of Moses is the song of the Lamb. In the second verse of this song, there is a profession of real religion. "The Lord is my strength, and song; he also is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." In the eleventh verse also, the spirit of true religion, is very fully expressed. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" The peculiar spiritual relation of this people to God is recognized, verses 16 and 17. "Fear and dread shall fall upon them: By the greatness of thine arm, they shall be as still as a stone; till *thy people* pass over, O Lord; till thy people pass over, which thou hast redeemed. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established." It is to be remembered, the people, as a body, united with Moses in this song. Did ever then, a people, more deserve the name of a professing people? Were there ever any professions of godliness, more consonant, with sanctification of heart?

To this scene of united and public exultation, God, it would seem, had respect, in the direction given to Jeremiah, Jeremiah ii. 2. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord; all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come

upon them, saith the Lord." What equally express testimony have we to the visible piety of the Church under the last dispensation, at any period of it, antecedent to the millennium? If there be a parallel, it must be found in the first planting of it, under the immediate ministry of the Apostles.

It may be proper to remark as we go along, that in this passage in Jeremiah, and in a multitude of other places in the scripture, some of which will come into view in the course of this Treatise, Israel is addressed as a single person; a manner of speaking, which seems to have been chosen, to suggest as impressively as possible, the unity of the society. This mode of address teaches us, that the pattern of this society, as drawn by God, was calculated to fix upon it the same simplicity of character, which distinguishes the pious individual. Whether it be called a Congregation, a Flock, a Church, or Nation, (and it has all these names given to it,) an idea of the same simplicity of character is intended. And the meaning of these terms is precisely the same with that which is conveyed by them in the New Testament, as applicable to the Christian Church. Let it be farther remarked, that this community consists now of *households;* by no means excluding the *infant* part of them. The institution of the passover, is on this principle. Exod. xii. 4. "And if the *household*, be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it, according to the number of the souls; every man according to your eating shall make your count for the lamb." Be it remembered also, that they have all collectively, not excepting the infant part, been baptised into Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea,* and thereby had one characteristic name fixed upon them, "*Holiness to the Lord.*" Be it remembered farther, that whatever proselytes may have become attached to them, and incorporated into this society, by adoption, and are living; and all the children of proselytes, who have not apostatized, and gone off to idolatry, are identified with it; so that

* I. Corinthians x. 2.

the distinctions between them are those only of genealogy and office; and therefore, that whatever is, or shall be communicated by God to Israel, is to be understood as respecting all equally. This idea, founded upon proofs already adduced, and which need not here be repeated, we are to keep in view, as we progress in ascertaining the covenant history of this people. Whether these proselytes are many or few, is of no consequence to the general enquiry.

Events proved, that a large proportion of this people, who here made such excellent professions, at least of the male adults, were false hearted. "With many of them, God was not well pleased." They sung his praises, but soon forgat his works. They murmured. They were disobedient. They were children without faith; and, instead of entering the promised land, fell victims to divine displeasure in the wilderness. But this presents no difficulty. The reconcileableness of it, with the spirituality and absolute nature of the promises of the covenant, and the relation it formed, has been explained. All are not Israel who are of Israel. The covenant itself implied, that there would be hypocrites and apostates, under its visible administration. But let it be remarked, God speaks of Israel as his people, notwithstanding their disobedience, and their temporary idolatry. He does not immediately extirpate the offenders. He does not disown at once the covenant alliance. He easily yields to the intercessions of their mediator, Moses. He illustrates and confirms his character, as the Lord God, gracious, and merciful, slow to anger, and ready to forgive. And this character we shall find exemplified towards Israel in every period of time, till the coming of the Messiah. Nor is it displayed in a less clear, or less affecting manner, under the Gospel dispensation, and towards nominal Christians. Had God exterminated the offenders, upon the appearance of the first symptoms of disaffection of heart, without putting them upon farther trial, that amiable part of his character, his slowness to anger, which it was so much a dictate of wisdom and

benevolence, fully to illustrate, could not have been manifested at all. And the same remark will apply to the Church at every subsequent period of time.—We are not hastily to conclude, therefore, that because these offenders were suffered to continue a while in their visible relation to God, this relation was civil, and not entirely spiritual. Extirpation would indeed, have been as necessary upon one principle, as upon the other.

We have now followed the society of Israel to the foot of Sinai, and found it to be in fact exactly of that description which the covenant designed. Here a new subject of enquiry presents itself, to which we must attend, with the same careful and patient investigation, which was found necessary in ascertaining the nature of the covenant of circumcision.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Respecting the covenants of Sinai and Moab. In this chapter it is enquired, in what respects the covenants of Sinai and Moab, are distinguishable from the covenant of Circumcision, and the new covenant, predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and mentioned by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as taking effect under the Gospel dispensation; whether the covenant of Sinai was the covenant of works; and whether it was designed to form the Hebrew community into a civil; or to continue them a religious society.*

IT is undeniable that the covenant of Sinai, and that of Moab are the same. They were propounded to, and accepted by the same persons. For Moses, in the 5th chapter of Deuteronomy, where he is introducing the Moab covenant, says, that the covenant of Sinai was made with the very persons, to whom he was then speaking. "The Lord our God, made a covenant with *us* in Horeb.* The Lord made not this covenant with our Fathers, but with *us* who are here all of us alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire." The same law was wrought into them both, as may be seen by comparing the one with the other. They were proposed in the same terms, engage the same blessings to the obedient, and denounce the same curses on the disobedient.—Some verbal variations are to be observed. Some historic details, there are in the one, which are not in the other. Some motives from experience are urged in the latter, which are not urged in the former. Still it is undeniable, that the covenant of Moab is but a renewal of the Sinai covenant.

* Horeb and Sinai were two elevations of ground, very near to each other, the latter higher than the former, both of them standing upon one mountain, as their common base. This is the reason that the names Horeb and Sinai, are used in the scripture promiscuously. The same mountain is intended. See Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, and Stackhouse's History.

Writers give very different representations of the ture of this covenant. Overlooking all theories, let s search the scriptures, and see what the account is hich they give of it. It is to be observed,

1. That, in the 2 and 3 verses of the 5th chapter of euteronomy, a passage just quoted, Moses ex-ressly distinguishes this covenant, from the cove-nt which God established with Abraham, Isaac, and cob. "The Lord our God made a covenant with us n Horeb. The Lord made *not this covenant with our Fathers.*" If God did not make this covenant with their fathers, certainly it is distinguishable from that which he *did* make with them.

This difference is also observed by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, viii. chapter, 8 and 9 ver-es. "For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, *in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt.*" He does not go back to the time when God established the cove-nant of circumcision with Abraham. He goes to the exodus only; when the Sinai covenant was made.— If the Abrahamic and the Sinai covenants were the same, he could with no propriety have fixed upon this as the time when the covenant, to which the new cov-enant is contrasted, was made. For the origin of the covenant is evidently intended.

That these covenants are quite distinct from each other, is also evident from a passage in Deuteronomy, vii. 12. "Wherefore it shall come pass, that if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee *the cove-nant and mercy which he sware unto thy fathers.*" The judgments here mentioned, with the promise in case of keeping them, constitute the covenant of Sinai. But this promise respects *another covenant;* the covenant sworn unto their fathers. The application and exe-cution of this other covenant was engaged, as the re-

ward, or the blessing, which should follow upon their keeping the Sinai covenant. Then certainly they are not the same. The difference between these two covenants will appear clearly as we pursue our enquiries.

2. The covenant of Sinai is distinguishable from the new covenant, mentioned in the passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, just quoted. The establishment of this new covenant was predicted both by Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Jeremiah xxxi. 31,—34. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to thecovenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, though I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more." See also, the 32d chapter, from the 36th verse and onward. Ezekiel predicts the making of this covenant, in the following terms. Ezekiel, xxxvii. 24, to the end. "And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt. And they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children, forever; and, my servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a *covenant of peace* with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be

their God, and they shall be my people. And the the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore." It is mentioned also by Zachariah, vii. 8. The passage above referred to in the 8th of Hebrews, is plainly a quotation from Jer. xxxi. 31.

The terms of these prophecies shew, that the covenants mentioned are materially different. The dissimilar characters given to them in these passages, and in other parts of scripture, prove them to be different. The one is *old,* (παλαια) the other is *new* (καινη.) The one had already been established; the other was yet to be established. The one is *not according* to the other. The one was broken, " which my covenant they brake ;" the other is not. The one left the subjects of it impenitent and disregarded, " *for I regarded them not, saith the Lord ;*" the other places the subjects of it, in the fullest sense, partakers in the divine blessing. The former, II Cor. iii. 6, is of the *letter* (γραμματος) ; which killeth ; the latter is of the *spirit* (πνευματος) which giveth life. The former is the ministration of *death* and *condemnation ;* the latter, the ministration of the *spirit* and of *righteousness :* Ibid, 7, 8, 9 verses. The former is *done away ;* the latter *remaineth* ; Ibid. 10th verse. The old covenant did not take away sins ; the new, does ; Rom. xi. 26. 27. " And so all Israel shall be saved ; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant unto them, *when* I shall *take away their sins.*" Moses was the mediator of the one ; Jesus Christ is the mediator of the other. John i. 17. " *The law* was given by Moses ; but *grace* and *truth* came by Jesus Christ." The former was sealed by the blood of calves and of goats ; Heb. ix. 19. The latter was sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Matth. 26. 28.

These differences are essential. They furnish the distinctive character of each ; and will lead us to determine with certainty, whether this new covenant was the same with that which was established with Abra-

ham, or different from it. This will have our attention in its place. It is to be remarked here,

3. The basis, the radical principle of the Sinai covenant was, *law*; first, the decalogue, or ten commandments, as a compendious system of duty; and then what is commonly called the *ritual law*, embracing all the precepts which were received from God by Moses, and delivered to the people, respecting their interior economy, their sacrifical worship, their offerings, oblations, tithes, priesthood, tabernacle, &c. These precepts were as obligatory, as those of the decalogue; and with them went to constitute the law. That the law is the basis of the Sinai covenant, is evident, from a bare inspection of it; from the attestation of John, that the law came by Moses; and from the express manner in which the law is so often called the covenant. Passages to this purpose have already been referred to.

In this point, the Sinai covenant differs essentially from the new covenant. Both have respect to law.—But the former is the law promulged only; the latter is the law, not promulged, or attended with denunciations of death; but the matter of a most gracious efficient promise, and written upon the heart.

4. To this law, was united, as an appendage of the covenant, the *curse*. Deuteronomy xxvii. 26. "Cursed be he who confirmeth not all the words of this law, to do them, and all the people shall say Amen." Ib. xxviii. 15, 16. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God, to observe to do all his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shall thou be in the city, &c." Ib. xi. 2, 6. "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and *a curse*." This curse is called *death;* and by this is intended something altogether beyond the calamities which are felt in this world, or the dissolution of the body. For these were no less the experience of the obedient than the disobedient. It can be no other than that ultimate punishment, which, according to the de-

nunciations of the Bible throughout, is to overwhelm the impenitent. Hence it is, that the apostle tells us that the law *worketh wrath ;* and assures us, that this wrath is a matter of future suffering, and the final portion of the impenitent. Romans ii. 5. "But after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath, *against the day* of *wrath ;* and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." But,

5. We are not to imagine that the law, with its curse, exclusively constituted the Sinai covenant. It consisted in part of promises. Or, if this be not exactly correct, it is correct to say, that promises were appended to it. Language of the nature of promise was wrought even into the decalogue. "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments--that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the 8th chapter, 6th verse, says of Christ. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon *better promises.*" This assertion, that the promises of the new covenant are *better* than those of the old, most evidently implies, that there were promises upon which the old was established. It is implied indeed, that the covenant and the promises are distinguishable, as the foundation is distinguishable from the superstructure. But promises are inseparably connected with the one, no less than with the other. Accordingly, if we look into the Sinai covenant, we shall find, that there were in fact, several promises attached to it. Thus, in the beginning of the 19th chapter of Exodus, where the Sinai covenant is introduced, we observe it written, "And Moses went up unto God : And the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying ; thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on Eagles wings, and brought you even unto myself:— Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and

keep my covenant, *then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, an holy nation.*" To this proposal the people agreed. The follows the promulgation of the law, which, according to engagement, they were to keep. This runs through the 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 chapters. To the law, thus far communicated, the people consent. Chapter xxiv. 3 verse. "And Moses came, and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered, with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do."—These words are called, verse 7, *the book of the covenant.* This covenant was then sealed by Moses with blood: verse 8. "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Then follow, through the 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 chapters, directions for building the tabernacle, and preparing its furniture, respecting the officiating priesthood, their apparel, services, the offerings, &c. The promulgation of the law is then interrupted, and the covenant violated by the idolatry at the foot of the mountain. At the intercession of Moses, this breach of the covenant is so far pardoned, that in chapter xxxiv the promulgation of the law is resumed. The residue of this book is taken up in detailing how Moses and the people executed the directions they had received from God, respecting the tabernacle.

The promulgation of the law is resumed, and continued through the twentyfive first chapters of Leviticus. Then a promise is introduced; chapter xxvi. verse 3, and onward. "If ye will walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them, I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land

safely——for I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you, and ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old, because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and *will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*"

The giving of the law proceeds again through the last chapter of this book, and though several chapters of the book of Numbers. The most material articles of it are recapitulated by Moses through the book of Deuteronomy. Here also we find promises repeatedly inserted. See Chap. vii. 12——26. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant, and the mercy, which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people &c." See also chap. xi. 13, and on. "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul; that I will give you the rain of your land, &c." Another series of promises is found in the 15th chap. beginning at the 4th verse. "For the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for an inheritance to posses it: Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day: For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he hath promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many Nations, and shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, and they shall not reign over thee." The last series of promises is found in the 14 first verses of the 28th chapter. "And it shall

come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high, above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field: Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.—The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee, in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God to walk in his ways. &c."

Thus we find, in fact, promises appended to the Sinai covenant.

We are next to enquire into the nature of these promises. The writer of the Epistle to the Heb. in a passage which has been quoted, distinguishes between the promises of this covenant, and those of the new covenant, as of a different character. Chapter viii. 6. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a *better covenant*, which was established upon *better promises*. Not only is the covenant better; but the promises are better. It is altogether a better covenant. The law written upon the heart, and precluding finally the curse, is better than the law promulgated only, and bringing along with it the curse. The *promises* are better. Wherein are the promises of the one covenant better than those of the other? About this there has been much controversy. Let us see if the scriptures will not guide us to a decisive answer.

These promises are evidently not better as to their origin; for both sorts of promises are from God. They are not better as to the certainty of their being fulfilled. For the veracity of God is pledged as much in the promises of the Sinai covenant, as in those of the New covenant.

They are not better as to the ultimate good in which they terminate. For the promises of the Sinai covenant terminate in this. "Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, an holy nation; and I will walk among you, *and be your God, and ye shall be my people.*" But the promises of the new covenant terminate in nothing; nor could they possibly terminate in any thing better. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," is expressly the blessing in which both covenants terminate.

The promises of the Sinai covenant involved *life.* Leviticus xviii. 5. "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and judgments; which, if a man do, he shall *live* in them; I am the Lord." Deuteronomy xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you this day, *life* and death, blessing and cursing—therefore choose *life,* that both thou and thy seed may *live.*" Ib. xxxii. 47. "For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your *life.*"

The promises of the new covenant involve the same thing. John xiv. 19. "Because I *live,* ye shall *live* also.

It is pretended by some, that the life promised in the Sinai covenant, was only the protraction of an existence in this world, under circumstances of outward prosperity. This idea is advanced merely to carry out the scheme of the carnality of the covenant, and to make the promises of it quadrate with the doctrine, that the obedience which the law required was external and civil, without any respect to a principle of piety within.

Not one word of this kind is found in the covenant. And what reason can there possibly be to attach to the promises of it such an interpretation? Had the term life, a meaning in this covenant, so infinitely below what

to be bestowed, is the righteousness of faith, a righteousness without works. This is *forgiveness of sin.* Romans iv. 6. "Even as David describeth *the blessedness* of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, *blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*" This blessedness does not come upon the circumcision only, but upon the uncircumcision also.

The reader is probably now prepared to subscribe to the idea, that the new covenant, and the covenant which God established with Abraham, are the same. Perhaps no farther evidence of this need be adduced. But to remove all doubt, let us, with the analysis which has been given of the Abrahamic covenant in our recollection, briefly retrace the leading features of each, and see, if those which apply to the one, do not apply to the other also.

The promises of the Abrahamic covenant respected a natural and adoptive seed. So do the promises of the new covenant. Members of the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, are expressly the objects.—They are objects in the proper, primitive sense, as such. And that the same covenant extends to the adopted Gentiles, is evident, from the declaration of Paul, Ephesians i. 2—6. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the Grace of God, which is given me to youward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, which, in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles, and prophets, by the Spirit; *that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body;* and partakers of *his promise in Christ,* by the Gospel."

The promises of the Abrahamic covenant were absolute, securing the holiness of those on whom they terminated, and so, as we have seen, are those of the new covenant.

In the former, sovereignty, in determining the objects of mercy, was expressed; and so it is in the latter.

The latter holds forth and secures the righteousness of faith; a righteousness without works; the non-imputation of sin; "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more;" so does the former. This was eminently the blessing which rested upon Abraham, by virtue of that covenant, which God established with him. For it is expressly declared to be, the righteousness of faith, which was sealed to Abraham by circumcision. Romans iv. 11. Here let the reader recollect what has been said upon the righteousness connected with Abraham's faith; and especially, let him carefully notice, by an inspection of the context, that the apostle is not speaking of the righteousness of Abraham's faith, as an exercise; i. e. of the moral qualities of his faith, but of something, which, by faith, *he found.*

The Abrahamic covenant was the ministration of the Spirit; and so is the new covenant.

The former brought the person, in whom it took effect, into that relation, that God was actually his God; and so does the latter.

There was no curse wrought into the Abrahamic covenant; nor is there any into the new covenant.

The former *remains*, or is *everlasting*; and the latter has the character, that it *remaineth.*

The former was confirmed of God in Christ; and so is the latter.

The execution of the one, is also the execution of the other.*

We conclude therefore, with certainty, that, agreeably to all that has been said upon the Abrahamic covenant, *that* and *this* are the same. The promises, objects, and Mediator of the covenant are the same; and the covenant, as it takes effect, is the same. The Abrahamic covenant was then transmitted, and executed, through successive generations of the Isrealitish people, till the Messiah. And as certain as it was, it is

* "I am apprehensive, that if the matter should be accurately examined, it would be found, that the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision, and the Sinai covenant, are not so very distinct as Pœdobaptists seem to suppose." Andrews's Vindication, page 34. The reader will judge.

still in operation, and is yet to have a more extended effect, with respect both to the house of Israel, and the Gentiles, than has hitherto been experienced.*— The Sinai covenant, different in all the particulars which have been mentioned, was superinduced upon the covenant which God established with Abraham; or, as the apostle expresses it, *added*. "Wherefore then," he asks, Galatians iii. 19, "serveth the law?" And answers, "It was *added* because of trangressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promises were made."—*Till the seed should come.* This manner of expression proves, that the Sinai covenant was to continue only till the coming of the seed, the Messiah; and then we know it was abolished. Hebrews viii. 13. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth, and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away."

That which is added, may be removed at pleasure, and leave that to which it is added, as it was, before the addition was made. Hence, the apostle observes, Gal. iii. 17. "And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the *law*, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The Sinai covenant was like the first tabernacle, to which it is compared, Hebrews ix. 2. This was distinguished from the holiest of all. In the latter, was the mercy seat; not in the former. This "was a *figure* for the time *then* present; in which were offered both gifts, and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.

* "Though the covenant is called a *new* and *second* covenant, yet only with respect to the former administration of it under the legal dispensation; and both administrations of it, under the law, and under the Gospel, are only so many exhibitions and manifestations of the covenant, under different forms, which was made in eternity." Gill's Reply to Clark, page 11.

The reason here given why the covenant is called a new one, is not the true reason; for it is called new in contrast to the Sinai covenant. It might be new in this sense, and yet old as to its date in itself considered; and there is full demonstration that it is old as eternity. This excepted, the passage accords entirely with our statement.

From what has been said, it appears, that though the Sinai covenant was law, and this law was sanctioned by the curse; and though many of the reasonings of Paul, appear to have respect to it, in that light merely, it was not altogether legal, nor in any respect hostile to grace; but, in coincidence with it, and operating in aid to it. Therefore, it *was not the covenant of works.* Such it is often very erroneously represented to be.* Quite different is the account which Paul gives of it. Gal. iii. 21—24. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid.—Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." To the law, as the basis of the covenant of Sinai, were appended promises, altogether of a gracious nature. It is an act of great condescension and grace, for the holy God, to make promises, though they are but conditional, to guilty creatures; especially when the promises embrace the highest possible good, and the condition, is that obedience, which is obligatory, in itself, and prior to the annunciation of promise.† In its natural tendency, the Sinai covenant operated in aid to the Abrahamic covenant. To use the figure of the apostle, it was a schoolmaster, to lead those, to whom it was administered, to Christ, who was the great confirmer of that covenant. The promises of it were founded in Christ's

* "On the other hand that covenant which requires obedience, and promises blessings conditionally, is the covenannt of works." Andrews's Vindication page 37. "The truth is, that the Sinai Covenant, which was confessedly the constitution of the Jewish Church, was, in the nature of it, a covenant of works." Ib. page 69.

† By condition, here, as it respects the Sinai covenant, is meant no more than what the apostle means, when he says, Hebrews iii. 14. "For we are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." The legal Jews treated the Sinai covenant as conditional in a very different sense. They treated it in a manner which entirely excluded grace. But condition, as suggested by the apostle in this passage, is perfectly evangelic. It applies to grace, as truly as to law. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. *If* any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelations iii. 20. Faith involves the inscription of the law upon the heart. Christ is the end of the law; and he who hath Christ hath life. He who believeth shall be saved; he who believeth not shall be damned. Jews and Gentiles must be obedient to law, or they cannot be saved. The law, though, not the principle of life, is still the narrow way. It is as much so to the Gentiles, as it ever was to the Jews. Faith does not make void the law; yea, it establishes the law.

intervention; and grew out of that one eternal covenant, which all that is done for the salvation of the Church, in this world, does but execute. The priesthood, sacrifices, and ablutions, which this covenant ordained, were all typical of Christ, or referred to him. Hence, we are told, Hebrews iv. 2, that the Gospel was preached unto them, as well as unto us. And hence, Moses, with evident design to preclude the idea, that the blessing was to be expected upon a mere legal principle, expressly told the people, Deuteronomy ix. 4: "Speak not in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out before thee, saying, For my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations, doth the Lord drive them out from before thee. Not *for thy righteousness*, or *for the uprightness of thine heart*, dost thou go to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations, doth the Lord thy God drive them out from before thee; *and that he may perform the word, which he sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*" The blessing proposed in the Sinai covenant, if conferred at all, was to be conferred entirely by grace, and in fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. The Sinai covenant, therefore, was very far from being the original covenant of works. The covenant of works was wholly done away by the apostacy of the progenitors of our race. It could never be overtured afterwards, as a foundation of hope, among any of their guilty descendants; no, not upon the supposition of their repentance. The covenant of works supposes those to whom it is proposed, to be innocent. The covenant of Sinai supposes that the objects of it are guilty. The covenant of works makes no provision for pardon. The covenant of Sinai does. The covenant of works makes sinless obedience the condition of the blessing. The covenant of Sinai made provision for the forgiveness of sins, not yet committed; therefore the blessings of it were suspended upon obedience short of that which is absolutely sinless. Those who failed of entering the promised land, did not

fail because they had not strictly obeyed the covenant of works; but because of *unbelief*. And those who entered, entered not on the ground, that they had been perfectly obedient to the covenant of works, but because they were subjects of faith, as a character. Faith, in the Gospel sense, had nothing to do with the obedience which belonged to the covenant of works: But faith is the principle of that obedience which is required in the Sinai covenant. Compare Deuteronomy xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14, with Romans x. 6, and on. The difficulty with the law, was, that it did not secure this obedience. Faith in Christ does. Faith is always of a truly obedient nature. Moses is expressly mentioned by the writer to the Hebrews, as an eminent subject of faith; and his faith certainly involved obedience to the Sinai law. If he had not been obedient to that law, he would have been an object of the curse. Faith is mentioned by our Savior himself as among the weightier matters of the *law;* Matthew xxiii. 23. "Wo unto you Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and *faith.*" The Sinai covenant then was very far from being a covenant of works, or a covenant with which faith, in the evangelical sense of that term, was not concerned.

It is indeed infinitely derogatory to the supreme Ruler of the universe, to insinuate, that he addressed a covenant to his people, which made perfect personal obedience, the meritorious ground of hope, and that exclusively; when their known disobedience had excluded the possibility of such a hope. This would have had a direct tendency to lead them into the most fatal delusion.

Nor was the Sinai covenant a *civil compact*; making God and the people, parties; He as their political sovereign, and they as his subjects. It had not in it a vestige of any thing of this kind. It was simply a religious institution, and designed for no purposes but such as were purely religious.

Here we advance a negative against laboured theories, and high authorities; even among those, who are not driven to any exigence, for the support of a sectarian hypothesis. It is therefore necessary, before we close our examination of the Sinai covenant, to look into this matter with particular attention. Modesty, it is presumed, does not forbid it.

By *civil*, in this connexion, is to be understood, that which merely appertains to objects of our present temporal life; and which has no foundation in religion, or respect to it. The term civil has a Latin derivation. *Civis*, denoted a subject of the Roman government. *Civilis*, qualified persons, actions, or things, which respected that government merely. But no one will pretend, that the Roman government was founded upon, or acted in aid to religion. A temporal sovereign, as such, is designated for purposes merely temporal. Temporal governments, instead of being promotive of religion, have almost universally been the scourges of it. No doubt a civil magistrate may be a religious man, and perform the duties of his office religiously. And civil government may be subservient to religion; as we know all opposition to God indirectly is. But a mere civil interest, is very far indeed, from being a religious interest. Generally, if not universally, they are opposing interests. Suppose the whole world to this moment had been as perfectly subject to God's government, as the holy angels are; and suppose, that 500 persons were to go off, and form to themselves a government of another kind, which should have no respect to the government under which they had hitherto lived; and in which, God, and his authority, should be disowned. Would not this government be founded in apostacy and atheism? Allow that these persons live, under this new government, in tolerable order, without however the least affectionate acknowledgement of God, Would they not still live in complete practical atheism? "Render," said our Saviour "unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things which are God's." Their pretentions are entirely distinct.

That several institutions of the Sinai covenant had respect to actions, and things, which ordinarily come under the description of civil, such as judgment upon trespass, the partition of property, the fulfilment of contracts, &c. is not to be disputed. But it will not follow, that these were civil institutions, in a sense distinct from religious. Nor is there any propriety in applying the term civil to them. This is not a term which the scripture has appropriated, as descriptive of any of its institutions or duties. We may as well say, that Arbitrators and Deacons, of the primitive Christian Church, were civil officers, as to say, that the judges in Israel were such. We may as well say, that the charitable provision, which was made by the Christian Church, for its poor, or its ministers, was a civil establishment; as to say, that the payment of tythes, and the offerings of the tabernacle, were a tax upon the subject, to support the authority of God, as a temporal sovereign.

If an economy, which, in a subordinate view, partly respects secular objects, be on that account civil; the Christian Church is certainly a civil insitution. If, for this reason, the Hebrew Community was a Theocracy; the Christian Church is undoubtedly a Theocracy. Were this all that is intended by representing the Sinai covenant, as in whole, or in part, a civil institution, there would be no dispute; for every man must be left at liberty to use his own words. The business of the Author, in this case, would be merely with the critic. But the use of terms and the representations given, in those treatises, to which we have respect, are such, as to make the Sinai Covenant, in whole, or in part, a mere civil institution, in a sense opposite to religion. Obedience was required, say these treatises and accepted, which had not its foundation in real piety.

The Hebrew Community (say they) was a Common-wealth. God placed himself at the head of it, as its king. The priesthood formed his court. The tabernacle was his palace. The tithes, offerings, and expiations, were his revenue. He made war and peace, like other mon-

archs of the earth. And he subjected the disorderly to corporal punishments, and temporal death, exactly in a manner, and on principles, resembling the penal codes, of civil governments generally. Thus the late Dr. John Erskine, in his Dissertation, upon the Nature of the Sinai Covenant, tells us, Theolog. Dissertations, page 1. "To Israel pertained the covenants, not the covenant of grace only, but another covenant, expressly distinguished from it (he means the Sinai Covenant) in virtue of which, many, destitute of inward piety, and no way interested in the covenant of grace, yet had a just title to another kind of covenant blessings." By this covenant, he says, page 3, "God, as monarch of the Jewish Nation, promised them a long, and prosperous possession of Canaan, on condition of their external obedience, to a variety of laws, precepts, and judgments." He says, same page, "Obedience to these laws was never designed to entitle to heavenly and spiritual blessings." In page 4, he says, "It is however necessary to observe, that God entered into that covenant, under the character of king of Israel. He is termed so in scripture; and he acted as such, disposed of offices, made war and peace, exacted tribute, enacted laws, punished with death, such of that people as refused him allegiance, and defended his subjects from their enemies." Page 5. "There (in the Sinai covenant) he appeared chiefly as a temporal Prince, and therefore gave laws, intended rather to direct the outward conduct, than to regulate the heart." Hence he is constrained to say, page 6. "The fidelity and allegiance of the the Jews was secured, not by bestowing the influences of the Holy Spirit, necessary to produce faith and love; but barely by external displays of majesty, and greatness, calculated to promote a slavish subjection, rather than a cheerful filial obedience." This theory leads him to the following mean idea of the Israelites, even when obedient to the Sinai law. "A fit emblem of the Sinai covenant, in which the Jews were hired, by the prosperous possession of the land of Canaan, to perform a variety of slavish, burdensome services; if they

did the work they were only to expect the wages."—Page 24. "Neither the law of nature, nor the covenant of grace, but the Sinai covenant alone, placed men in the relation of *mercenary slaves*."

Mr. Locke had given an account of the community of Israel, in his Letters on Toleration, which nearly corresponds with this. "As to the case (says he) of the Israelites in the Jewish commonwealth; who, being initiated into the Mosaical rites, and made *citizens of the commonwealth*, did afterwards apostatize from the worship of the God of Israel; these were proceeded against as rebels and traitors, guilty of no less than high treason. For the commonwealth of the Jews, different in that from all others, was an absolute *Theocracy*. Nor was there, nor could there be, any difference between the Commonwealth and the Church. The laws established there, concerning the worship of the one invisible Deity, were the civil laws of that people, and a part of their political government, in which God himself was the Legislator.*" Here we have the Church of Israel fairly transformed into a mere civil Commonwealth.

Dr. Gill attempts to rid himself of the argument drawn from the fact, of the membership of infants, in the Israelitish Church, by the same pretence. "The covenant of Horeb, was indeed a national covenant, and took in all, children, and grown persons; and which was no other than a *civil contract*, and not a covenant of grace, between God and the people of Israel, he *as king*, they *as subjects*; he promising to be their Protector and Defender; and they to be his faithful subjects, and to obey his laws."† Lowman, Witsius, Warburton, and several other modern writers, of great reputation, have given a similar view of this society. These quotations however, must serve as a specimen of the general theory.

* Bishop Warburton says, Mr. Locke was the first man who fell upon this invention. It is certainly a pity he was not the last.

† Gill's Reply to Clark, page 37. The Doctor did not consider that infants were included in this society, long before the covenant of Sinai was introduced.

That there is some resemblance between the institutions of the Sinai covenant, and those of ordinary civil governments, though this resemblance is certainly remote, will not be denied; and whether some things might not have been ordained, out of respect to the existing institutions of those governments, we shall not pretend to say. But one would think, the simple consideration of the *moral nature* and *end* of mere civil establishments, quite sufficient to prove, that a system of duty proceeding from God, could not come under this description.

To prepare the way for the refutation of this theory, it may be proper to make two or three preliminary remarks.

1. We are not to judge of the nature of the Sinai covenant, by what was, in fact, the character of the people, under the first institution of the covenant, or at any period afterwards, till it was abolished; any more than we are to judge of the Gospel from the actual character of its professors. A million of hypocrites will not prove, that the institution was calculated to promote hypocrisy, or to make it an acceptable service when exhibited. Let it be remarked again,

2. That the institutions upon which a society is founded, cannot be judged of by any new modifications, which that society may, in subsequent periods, assume. These modifications may arise out of incidental causes, and be an abuse of the institution. A regal government was introduced into the community of Israel; but this was a departure from the institution; not a character of it.

3. It has been already proved, that the covenant of circumcision was the constitutional basis of the community of Israel; that the principle of this covenant was a spiritual obedience to God, as God; that its promises were absolute; and embraced that good, and that only, which grace secures to the saved; and that the relation which it formed between God, and its subjects, was spiritual, and indissolvable. If then, it could be proved, that the institutions of the Sinai

covenant, its relations, duties, rewards, and penalties, were, in part, or altogether, civil; this would do nothing towards proving the discontinuance, or transformation of the Society, which was founded in the Abrahamic covenant, and which consisted of the *seed*. For then these institutions, and the society formed by them, would be merely superinduced and adventitious; like the putting on of an exterior garment, which neither destroys, nor alters the wearer. When these institutions are withdrawn, as it is conceded the Sinai covenant was, at the coming of Christ; the original society will be left just what it was before this superinduction was made. But there is an offensive incongruity in this, imperium super imperium, this double sort of society; especially when the Pentateuch, and the following history present one society only, and that of the simplest construction.

No doubt this theory is the product of human ingenuity; and not a work of the wise and immutable Builder of the Universe. Let us see if this cannot be evinced.

It has been proved, that the promises of the Sinai covenant terminate in the same good, in which the promises of the Abrahamic covenant terminate. It has also been proved, that the curse of the Sinai covenant, terminates in evil, entirely distinguishable from the dissolution of the body, and beyond any thing experienced in this life. This must be the punishment which the scriptures generally denounce against final impenitents. If then, it can be made to appear, that the law, which constitutes the radical principle of this covenant, required inward piety, and accepted of nothing, as obedience, which did not result from uprightness of heart; it will undeniably follow, that the Sinai covenant was purely a religious, and not at all a civil, or mere temporal institution. It will follow also, that if the Hebrew community was, in whole, or in part, irreligious, hypocritical, or carnal, it was because they were disobedient to the covenant, and not because they followed its directions.

Now it is most evident, that the Sinai law required inward piety. For thus its fundamental precepts run. Deuteronomy vi. 4, and on. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt *love* the the Lord thy God, *with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* And these words which I command thee this day, shall be *in thy heart.* And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." 13th verse. "Thou shalt *fear* the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." Ib. x. 16. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your *heart*, and be no more stiff necked." 12th verse. "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to *fear* the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to *love* him, and to serve the Lord thy God, *with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?*" Ib. xii. 12. "And thou shalt *rejoice* before the Lord thy God." Ib. xi. 13. "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command you this day, *to love the Lord your God*, and to serve him, *with all your heart*, and *with all your soul;* that I will give &c." Here all the laws of the Sinai covenant are explained, as comprised in *loving God* as a portion, and serving him *with all the heart*, and *with all the soul.* Surely then, piety, and nothing else, was obedience to these laws. According to this view of the law, the people were told, that *hatred* of God would bring on them his severest displeasure. Deuteronomy vii. 9, and 10. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God; which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that *love* him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations. And repayeth them that *hate him* to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that *hateth him;* he will repay him to his face." In conformity to this view of the law, they are also told, Ib. iv. 19.— "But if from thence, (a state of captivity) thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; *if thou*

*seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.*" These passages prove, that love was required, as the principle of obedience, to every part of the law. He who hated God, was, let him do externally what he might, in the eye of the law, an object of wrath. He was so altogether, and was to be exterminated without mercy, accordingly. This is exactly agreeable to the account which the apostle Paul gives us of the real Jew. Romans ii. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew, who is one *outwardly;* neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one *inwardly;* and circumcision is that of *the heart*, in the *spirit;* not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." The Jew is one who is morally conformed to the law.

The people of Israel, therefore, when they agreed to keep the law, saying, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient," made a strictly religious profession, and engaged to comply with every precept of the law *piously*. It was upon this principle; it could have been on no other, that God said, he had avouched them to be his people; and called them "*a holy nation, a kingdom of priests.*"* Farther arguments to prove that the Sinai Covenant, and the Socie-

* The astonishing propensity of many divines, (it seems to prevail moſt among thoſe who are of the greatest literary eminence) to reduce the Mosaic system to an accordance with worldly establishments, may be seen in the following quotation from the fourth Vol. of Warburton's Divine Legation, page 14. "It will be necessary then to observe, that God, in his infinite wisdom, was pleaſed to stand in two arbitrary relations towards the Jewiſh people, besides that natural one, in which he stood towards them and the rest of mankind in common. The first was that of a *tutelary Deity*, gentilitial and local; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who was to bring their posterity into the land of Canaan, and to protect them there as his peculiar people. The second was that of *supreme magiſtrate and lawgiver*. And in both these relations he was pleased to refer it to the people's choice, whether or no they would receive him for their God and King. For a tutelary Deity was supposed by the ancients to be as much a matter of election as the civil magistrate." Thus it is necessary to go abroad, not only to the civil establishments of the world; but to the extravagances of its idolatry, to explain an insitution of Jehovah, designed expressly to form a kingdom which is not of this world; but in its origin, principle, and end, entirely the opposite of every civil and idolatrous association. This expedient, to reconcile philoſophy and christianity, is a covered kind of Deism; which, while it professes to defend the authority of the Holy Scriptures, spreads over them obscurity and doubt. When will the Church be compleatly rescued out of the hands of pretended friends, who are enemies in disguise, and stand forth, in that simplicity of holiness, which is her characteristic beauty!

ty it contemplated to form, were purely religious; as much so, as the Church under the Christian Dispensation, which I do not think it necessary largely to illustrate; but deem it proper, as corroborative of proof already adduced, briefly to mention, are these.

1. The Hebrew Community is expressly and repeatedly styled in the scriptures, a *Church*. Acts vii. 38. "This is he that was with the *Church* in the wilderness." Sometimes it is true, the term (Εκκλησια) Church, signifies a mere convocation of people, without respect to their character. But, as it is used in the scripture, in reference to the kingdom of God, it invariably signifies, a religious society; a society called, by a moral dispensation, out of the world.

2. Jesus Christ was the head, the glorious, and eternal king of the Hebrew Community. He was such as Mediator, and Savior. Psalm lxviii. 17, 18. "The Lord is among them as *in Sinai*. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also; that the Lord God might dwell among them." This passage, the Apostle Paul, Eph. iv, expressly applies to Christ. Another passage proving that Christ was the head and king of Israel, is found in I Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." But whom did the rebellious part of Israel tempt? Certainly their Jehovah; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and king of Israel; that almighty being, whom only they knew, as their deliverer, guide, guard, lawgiver, and object of worship. This is conclusively determined by the writer to the Hebrews, iv. chapter. "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works, forty years." It is the God of Israel, undoubtedly, who speaks here. And the passage from the I. Corinthians, lets us know, that Christ was this adorable person, who was thus tempted in the wilderness. That Christ was the king of Israel, is evident, also from

Zachariah, ix. 7. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold *thy king* cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. This prophecy is applied, Matthew xxi. 5, to Christ, as fulfilled in him. But Christ is not a temporal king. "My kingdom is not of this world. Man, who made me a divider, and a judge over you?" is his language. Christ as Mediator, is king of the Church only. Ephesians iii. 25, 26, 27. "As Christ loved *the Church*, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify, and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." He is made head over all things *unto the Church*. Ephesians i. 22.

3. The apostle Paul says, Galatians, iii. 24, that the law was a schoolmaster, to bring those to whom it was addressed, unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith. This teaches us, that the Sinai covenant was published with ultimate respect to Christ, as the seed, to whom, especially, the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were made. But this could not have been its character, if it had been a mere civil institution.—There is no manner of connexion between a civil institution, or the drudgery of a servant, who works merely for pay, and faith in Christ.

4. The object of the separation of the people of Israel, is said by God himself, to have been, that they might be holy. Deuteronomy xxvi. 28, 29. "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day, a peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments, and to make thee high, above all nations, in name, and in praise, and in honor; and that thou mayest be *an holy people*, unto the Lord thy God, as he hath promised thee." But if God united himself to this people as a mere temporal sovereign, and hired them to serve him, by the motive of wages, he contravened his own purpose.

5. By the prophet Jeremiah, the divine Majesty says; Jer. ii. 21. "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed." If this declaration refers to character, it was certainly a character formed according to the nature of the Sinai Covenant. If it refers to the covenant itself, then it asserts its perfect moral excellence. But if the institutions of the Sinai Covenant were not purely religious, in their nature and end; if a contract was made, which stipulated rewards for mere external allegiance, having no foundation in real piety, this is an assertion to which facts do not agree.

6. The declaration of Joshua, Josh. xxvi. 19. "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God," is unfounded, upon the supposition, that mere external civil allegiance was required, and accepted; or external services of any kind, not founded in true piety of heart. For mere citizens can serve their sovereign, let his character be what it may; and as well if they hate, as if they love him.

7. Unbelief was the sin especially, which prevented the obnoxious part of Israel from entering the promised land. Heb. iii. 19. "So we see they could not enter in *because of unbelief*." But unbelief is an offence which is opposed to evangelical faith, and not to any civil duty.

8. The impleaded theory is directly opposed to the solemn and explicit manner in which hypocrisy is condemned, both in the Old Testament, and in the New. A passage very expressly to this purpose, is found in Isaiah, i. chap. from the 10th to the 15th verse, inclusively. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the *law* of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, *who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?* Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths; the call-

ing of assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: Your hands are full of blood." This pointed testimony against outward services, agreeing, in their visible form, with the precepts of the Sinai covenant, which however had their principle in disaffection of heart, was made under the administration of that covenant, and had evident respect to it. This covenant must be what is intended by *law*, and *requirement*. Surely then the Sinai covenant required and accepted nothing but true piety.

9. It may be asked, how true piety could operate and express itself, but in obedience to the Sinai law? Was there a superior law, more spiritual in its precepts or motives, which piety obeyed? Certainly there was no such law. There was no other piety known in Israel, nor was any other possible, than that which was obedience to the Sinai covenant. Then piety and mere civil allegiance, if the latter were required, are the same thing. Yet, according to the hypothesis opposed, they are entirely distinct from, and even contrary to each other,

10. With respect to the God of Israel himself; How is it possible that he should so degrade, and sink himself, from the height of his glory, as to take rank with the miserable kings of the earth, the most of whom have been the mere scourges of humanity; that he should give the stamp of righteousness to actions demonstrably sinful, and declared by himself to be so; and that he should institute a system, or segment of a system, to form to himself mere mercenary subjects, kept in awe, and driven to obedience by terror; and not drawn by the willing principle of love? Here I shall avail myself of the sentiments of a Reverend Brother, on this subject, expressed, with his usual correctness. "The sinai covenant was not a mere exter-

nal covenant, which required only external obedience; for it was inconsistent with the nature and character of God, to make such a covenant with his people. An earthly prince whose authority extends to the overt acts of the subject only, may require mere external obedience; but God, whose authority reaches the heart, cannot require mere external obedience, without giving up his authority, and indulging his creatures in sin. If God had told his people that he would be their governor, preserver, and benefactor, if they would pay him only external allegiance and homage, he would at once have given up his moral government over them, and indulged them in all the wickedness of their hearts. But could he have given them such an indulgence in wickedness consistently with his perfect holiness, and ifinite hatred of sin?*

11. If we attend to the precepts transfused through the Sinai covenant, which respected the *moral intercourse* of Israel, one with another, it will appear that they all involved real piety of heart. Obedience to these precepts could not have been rendered on a selfish and mercenary principle.

These precepts required,

Benevolence to the poor and stranger—Lev. xix. 9. 10.

Equity in dealings—Ib. 13. verse;

Compassion to the deaf—Ib. 14. verse;

Impartiality in judging,—Ib. 15. verse;——that each one should love his neighbour as himself; that there should be no hatred, revenge, or grudging; and that in brotherly love they should rebuke offenders and not suffer sin in each other.—Ib. 17 and 18 verses:

That necromancy and witchcraft should be extirpated—Ib. 31;

That reverence should be shown to the aged 33;

That there should be no intermarriages with the heathen, lest they should introduce corruption of faith, worship, and manners, Deut. vii. 3;

* Emmons's Dissertation against Hemmenway. Page 86.

And generally it was required that they should be altogether just, and holy, because God is holy.

Even the ritual law, which has been represented as burdensome and carnal; disconnected from moral righteousness, and inward piety; and which Bishop Warburton says, was imposed on the Israelites, as a punishment of antecedent rebellions, very impressively taught, that real holiness was required as the distinctive character of Israel.

Such for example was the evident language of the laws which required,

A sin offering, for Aaron and his sons, at their consecration to the priesthood—Exod. xxix. 10.

That leaven should not be intermixed in things consecrated—Lev. ii. 11.

That things offered should be without blemish—Deut. xvii. 1.

That Aaron and his sons should totally abstain from strong drink—Ib. x. 9.

That certain beasts should be reputed, and not eaten, as unclean; that things touched by them should be deemed unclean; and that even the substance on which any water should come, in which an unclean thing had been rinsed; should itself be reputed unclean —Lev. xi, passim.

Other things in the ritual law, suggesting perpetually the same instruction, were,

The engraving upon the breastplate of the high priest, *Holiness to the Lord*;

The priests being forbidden to approach to God in the service of their order if they were subjects of any blemish—Lev. xxi. 16;

The interdiction of bastards, and mutilated persons, from entering into the Congregation of the Lord—Deut. xxiii. 1;

The requisition of cleanliness in the camp, as the residence of God—Ib. 14;

The impurity of women, after parturition, and the purifications prescribed—Lev. 12.

The uncleanness of the leper—Lev. 13; his being obliged to rent his clothes, make bare, his head, put a covering on his upper lip, and to cry, *unclean, unclean*; his exclusion from the camp, while his leprosy was upon him; and the ceremonies appointed for the cleansing of him who was healed of his leprosy;

The uncleanness of houses infected with leprosy, the necessity of tearing away the parts of the house infected, and carrying them without the city, and of a ceremonial cleansing of the house—Lev. 14.

The uncleanness attached to all issues of the body—Ib. 15; and finally,

The manner in which Aaron, was to enter the holy place annually, his flesh washed in water, attired in the consecrated robes of his office; with a burnt offering and a sin offering for himself, and for his house; with two goats taken from the people; the one to be slain as a sin offering in their behalf; and the other to be a scape goat to bear their sins into the wilderness; with the burning of incense before the mercy seat, with the blood of beasts, sprinkled upon the mercy seat, seven times, for an atonement for the transgressions of the people. These things certainly had a moral language. What did they teach? Did they teach, that the people, though they had nothing but moral pollution within, should be accepted as holy, if they were but externally obedient? The analogy of scripture, would lead us to conclude, they taught just the opposite. Nay, some passages clearly determine, that they did teach the opposite. It is observed, Heb. x. 1, that, "the law had a shadow of good things to come." It set forth, and therefore certainly taught, that spiritual purification, which the covenant of grace secured; and which the agency of the Spirit was to produce in the Gospel day. "In those sacrifices" (which were prescribed in the ritual law) it is said, verse 3, "remembrance was made of sins every year." They taught, and were designed instrumentally to beget repentance. But repentance is the spiritual purification of the soul. It is the opposite of a mere external service, not founded in

true piety. The Apostle Peter, in his 1st Epistle, iii. 21. in respect to the flood, says, "The like *figure* whereunto, even baptism doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience towards God." Providential and instituted baptisms, in the Church of God, always were *figures*; or instructive sensible emblems, of inward moral purity; such purity as God himself requires, and can approve.

Thus evidence crowds upon us from every source, that the Sinai Covenant, as it was not a covenant of works, so neither did it partake at all of the nature of a civil compact.

But it is said the Apostle Paul, calls the ritual institutions of the Sinai covenant, *elements of the world*, Gal. iv. 3; *weak and beggarly elements*, 9th verse; *A carnal commandment*, Heb, vii; 16. And says, that it had *a worldly sanctuary;* Ib ix. 1. *and that its ordinances were carnal*, 10th verse. Very well. But, if we pervert the Apostle's meaning; if we palm a perverse construction upon his testimony, and so fasten a character upon the Sinai covenant, which is altogether reproachful to the Divine Majesty, and repugnant to the uniform representations of his word, the fault will be ours, and not the Apostle's. What does he intend by these expressions? Is it his aim to teach us, that these institutions were really worldly, in opposition to religious? Or in the same sense, that mere civil institutions are worldly? Is it to be imagined, he insinuates, that they were foolish, and contemptible impositions; that they really required, a mercenary and selfish service, and were carnal, as sinful? No such thing. He is shewing the essential difference between law and grace, or works and faith, as grounds of justification. He explains his meaning, when he says, that these ritual institutions, "could not make the comers thereunto perfect, as *pertaining to the conscience*." In themselves, they were entirely inefficacious, to the purposes of procuring pardon and acceptance with God. They were but a *shadow* of good things to come; useful for the

time then present, as shewing the necessity of a Savior, and pointing to one; a yoke of bondage indeed, as the institutions of the Gospel are, when observed without saving faith, and on a mercenary principle; and gendering to bondage, as the law worketh wrath to the hypocrite. But it by no means follows, that the Sinai covenant was not a strictly religious institution; or that the real believing observance of it, while in force, was not true religion.

It is objected again, that in Ezekiel, xx. 25. God himself speaks of the laws of the Sinai covenant, as requiring something short of that real piety, to which the promise of eternal life is made. The words are, "Wherefore, I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." This is a passage of difficult interpretation. From the following verse, however, we seem to be led to consider the purport of it to be, that God, in punishment of the sins of the disobedient part of Israel, gave them up, in his providence, to the impious institutions and laws, of idolatrous nations; which they either introduced; or followed in the countries whither they were carried captive. This interpretation is adopted by Calvin. Whether it be the right interpretation or not, one thing is certain, that it is not the design of this passage, to depreciate the character of the Sinai law. Such a supposition makes it flatly contradict the 21st verse. "They walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them; which, if a man do, he shall even *live in them.*" It is impossible that both these contrary characters should apply to the same law.

On the whole, the Sinai covenant, though in itself it actually secured neither obedience, nor its rewards; as its precepts, institutions, and motives, were holy; as it was subservient to the effectuating of God's great object, the salvation of the Church; and as its promises were gracious, and terminated in the highest good, appears to have been such as to accord with the character which the Psalmist gives of it. Psalm xix. 7. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting (construc-

tively and instrumentally) the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb. Moreover also by them, is thy servant warned; and *in keeping of them there is a great reward.*"

## CHAPTER VII.

*Giving a view of the actual character of the Hebrew Community, from the establishment of the Sinai covenant, to the advent of the Messiah.*

WE have found that the Sinai covenant was administered to Israel, not as a temporal Commonwealth, but as the Church of God. This covenant multiplied instructions, means, and motives, beyond any preceding parallel; all calculated to attach the people to God, in a holy allegiance. These means were numerous and impressive, on purpose that this favored people might be put under trial; that the human character might clearly appear; and that when the Spirit should be poured out in more copious effusions in the Gospel day, the grace exercised might be the more conspicuous and glorious. Deuteronomy viii. 1, 2, 3. "All the commandments which I command thee this day, shall ye observe to do, that ye may live and multiply, and go in, and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, this forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart; whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not; neither did thy Fathers know; that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live." The trial was to continue as long as the dispensation should last. This being

a season of trial, it was necessarily a season of forbearance.* "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." If the kingdom of God had been taken directly from the rebellious part of Israel, upon the appearance of rebellion, and given to another people; this forbearance would not have had its proper illustration. The system of trial would have been defective. Neither the character of God, nor the human character would have been so fully made known. There would not have been so much justice in the enquiry, "What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked, that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? If then, in tracing the actual character of Israel, we find much perverseness in individuals, or in the body at large, we must expect also, as has been already hinted, to find much forbearance.

It is not to our purpose, to trace minutely the history of this people. The only question which it is of importance for us to resolve, is, whether they continued, through the period now under consideration, to maintain, in fact, their distinctive character, as the Church of God. It is said, that, whatever may have been the plan of the Hebrew community, as originally constituted by God; and however demonstrably it may be proved, that the Sinai covenant, as a posterior institution, was not designed, and did not operate, to change its character from a religious to a civil society, it did in fact, become a mere nation, like all the other nations of the earth; that here were kings, and their courts; generals, armies, and battles; that the character of the Jews, as drawn by their own prophets, was very bad; that, instead of brotherly love, by which saints are distinguished, wrongs of every description prevailed; that idolatry was substituted for the worship of God; and, in short, that this community, religiously

* Romans iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through *the forbearance* of God." It is by a scene of admirable forbearance, displayed through successive ages, that the work of redemption is accomplished.

considered, had much more the appearance of a society of knaves, than of a spiritual Church.

It is confessed, that the institution, originally holy, was corrupted; that there were seasons of extensive apostacy; and that the character given to Israel, *Holiness to the Lord*, was, during these seasons, in a great measure lost. We are willing that the history, and prophetic reproofs, of the Old Testament, should have their full effect, to sink the character of this people, from that height of religious purity, to which we should naturally expect, that the Sinai covenant, and the accompanying dispensations would form them. But let them not be sunk lower than the determination of God will warrant. His sentence must prevail; and all human opinions, which are not in conformity to it, are certainly erroneous.

After every allowance to their disadvantage, we still insist, that they continued to maintain their relation and character, in contradistinction to all other societies of men, as the kingdom or Church of God, quite down to the coming of the Messiah. This position is an important part of the scheme exhibited in this Treatise. To confirm it the following things are submitted.

1. It has been proved from the design of the separation of Abraham; from the view which the scriptures give us of his character, and relative state, prior to what is commonly called the covenant of circumcision; and from the analysis which has been exhibited of that covenant, that in him was founded a society, characteristically religious; that this society was to consist, primarily, of lineal descendents from him; that it was to be transmitted, by an uninterrupted succession, through their generations; and that it was to be indissolvable, and interminable. It has been proved that provision was made for the maintenance of its visible character, by such exceptions, as God should be pleased to make, in the course of his providence, and by the execution of such disciplinary laws, as he had ordained, or should enact. The actual continuation of this society as a religious society, till it is found under the guidance of God,

at the foot of Sinai, has been evinced. It has been shewn, that the Sinai covenant did not, in any degree, transform this society into one of a different description. It is not pretended, that there is any other part of the posterity of Abraham in whose persons it was perpetuated. The perpetuation of it, was absolutely necessary, for the purpose of transmitting the holy oracles of God. In the midst of it, we are certain, the Messiah, who is eminently the seed, was to arise; and when he appeared, and shewed himself unto Israel, "*he came unto his own.*"

From all which, it will demonstrably follow; I see not how any conclusion can follow, more undeniably, from any premises, that the Hebrew Community retained its character, as the kingdom of God, till the coming of Christ. To say that it terminated; and it did terminate, if it was transformed into a mere nation, according to the civil and ordinary acceptation of that term, is to say, that God's plan, in establishing a visible Church in the person and family of Abraham, was frustrated; and that his absolute promises, given under the form of an oath, failed of accomplishment. But,

2. As a farther proof of this position, it may be observed, that the same distinctive epithets, continue to be applied to this community; that God still recognizes the relation; owns them for his people, and declares himself their God; and this relation is expressed in terms, implying the same spiritual nearness, which subsisted between God and Abraham.* The *Lord God of Israel*, the *God of Jacob*; the *God of Zion*; are expressions which occur perpetually. God speaks of Israel collectively, as a *servant*, and a *son*, just as he addressed them before the exodus. Isaiah xliv.

* There are exceptions, in seasons of apostacy, and respecting the subjects of that apostacy. Thus, it is said, Hosea i. 9. "Then said the Lord, call his name, Loammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." But this is not inconsistent with the truth of the above remark. It rather confirms it. For this passage supposes, that till that time, at least, God had been, by covenant relation, their God. And it is evident, from the context, that it respects Israel, or the ten tribes, in distinction from Judah. See the preceding verse. Nay, the verse following shews, that it was not against the whole of Israel, that the rejection was entered. Why should there be these exceptions at all, if the whole community, in its spiritual relation, had long ago ceased to exist?

1. "Yet now, hear, O Jacob, *my servant*, and Israel, whom I have chosen." Jeremiah xxxi. 20. "Is Ephraim, my *dear son?* Is he a pleasant child? For, since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." Psalm lxxxi. 8, 9, 10. "Hear, *O my people*, and I will testify unto thee. O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange God be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange God. I am the Lord, *thy God;* which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Psalm c. 3. "Know ye that the Lord, he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are *his people*, and the *sheep of his pasture.*" Psalm cxlviii. 8, 14. "He also exalteth the horn of *his people*, the praise of all his *saints, even of the children of Israel*, a people *near* unto him." Isaiah, xliii. 1. "But now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob; and he that formed thee, O Israel; Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; for *thou art mine.*" Verse 5. "Fear not, for I *am with thee.*" 15th verse. "I am the Lord *your holy one*, the creator of Israel, *your king.*" Surely, this language, which is abundant all over the Bible, is entirely against the idea, of the termination of the community of Israel, as a Church.

3. That the religious character of Israel, as a community, was continued, is evident, from the numerous expressions of *endearment*, which are interspersed in the sacred books of the Old Testament. Thus, in the xliii. chapter of Isaiah, 4th verse, God says, "Since thou wast *precious* in my sight, thou hast been *honorable*, and I have *loved* thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Psalm lxxiv. 19. "O deliver not the soul of thy *turtle dove*, unto the multitude of the wicked, forget not the congregation of thy poor forever." Psalm lxxviii. 68. "But chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion, which he *loved.*" Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath *desired it for his habitation.*—This is *my rest forever;* here will I dwell; for I *have*

*desired it.*" Psalm cxxxv. 4. "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob, unto himself; and Israel, for his *peculiar treasure.*" Isaiah liv. 5. "For thy Maker is thy *husband.*" Jeremiah iii. 14. "Turn, O backsliding children; saith the Lord, for I am *married* unto you." Ib. xii. 7. "I have forsaken my house; I have left my heritage; I have given the *dearly beloved of my soul* into the hands of her enemies." Ib. xxxi. 3. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love;* therefore with *loving kindness* have I drawn thee." Can these endearing expressions be understood as applying to a mere nation of hypocrites, or a mere civil community?

4. This community, as God's peculiar treasure, and consisting of his redeemed, is often spoken of, and promises are made to it, in terms implying; nay, unequivocally determining, its unfailing *stability.* A few examples shall be presented. Psalm xlvi. 5, and 7. "God is in the midst of her, *she shall not be moved.* God shall help her, and that right early. The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our *refuge.*" Psalm xlviii. 8. "As we have heard, so have we seen, in the *city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God, God will establish it forever.*" Psalm lxxxvii. 5. "And *of Zion,* it shall be said, this and that man, was born in her, and the highest himself *shall establish her.*" Ib. cii. 28. "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed *shall be established* before thee." Ib. cxv. 12, 13, 14. "The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. The Lord shall *increase you more and more, you and your children.*" Isaiah xli. 10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; *yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*" These scriptures, and there are hundreds of a like tenor, are perfect trifling upon the supposition

that the community of Israel, was not perpetuated, in its religious character.

5. God's *treatment* of Israel, determines the continuance of their relation to him, under this character.—He extended an immediate superintendance over them, and subjected them to discipline, as appropriately his people, in distinction from the rest of the world.—The ignorance of the rest of the world he winked at.* He left its impieties comparatively unreproved. To Israel, he extended the instructions, reproofs, and chastisements of a Father. To this purpose, is that memorable passage in Isaiah liv. chapter. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee; *in a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment;* but with everlasting kindness, will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." St. Paul, addressing those, who were lineally descended from Abraham, says, Hebrews xii. 5. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you, *as unto children.* My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. But if ye be without chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." This manifestation of paternity was made towards the Hebrew, as clearly as it is towards the Christian Church. What abundant warnings; what pointed reproofs; what displays of anger; what tender remonstrances; and what denunciations of evil, against the guilty, run through the Old Testament? The mission of prophets, and the giving of oracular responses; the establishment of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, as a symbol of God's special residence; the altar, and the sacrifice; the presence, and the withdrawment of the visible glory, called the Shekinah, were expressions of the same thing. How do God's dispensations, in bestowing blessings, and inflicting judgments, in protecting, or exterminating, vary, as obe-

* Acts xvii. 30.

dience or disobience, is manifested by this people? What deliverances were wrought, when a spirit of repentance prevailed? And what terrible calamities followed general declensions? How often, and how extensively, were the rebellious cut off from the midst of their people, when they had flagrantly broken the covenant? The idolatry at the foot of Sinai, the sedition of Korah, the impure intercourse with the Midianites, the faithless report of the spies, the presumption at Ai, and the general murmurings of the wilderness, were not suffered to pass unpunished. During the period, now especially under our view, captivities, devastations, intestine, and national wars, famines, and pestilences, severely reproved prevailing sins, and wasted the rebellious.

5. It is to be carefully observed, that in the worst times, and when the greater part of this people, were, for their wickedness, cast off of God, there is always particular mention made of a *remnant*, who were the true Israel, and in whom the society was continued. Thus in the 6th chap. of Isaiah, after mentioning the reprobation of the refractory part of Israel, who, with respect to the period of which the prophet speaks, would seem to have been a majority, he adds, "But yet, in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and be eaten, as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves, so the *holy seed* shall be the substance thereof." In the time of the general defection, under the reign of Ahab, God says, I Kings xix. 18. "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." Jer. xv. 11. "The Lord said, verily it shall be well with thy *remnant*." Ezek. ix. 6. "Slay utterly old, and young, both maids and little children, and women, but come not near any man upon whom is the *mark*." Ib. xiv. 22. "Yet behold therein shall be left *a remnant*, that shall be brought forth, &c." Micah iv. 7. And I will make her that hatted *a remnant*, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord

shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth even forever." It is needless to multiply quotations of this kind. They are to be drawn from almost every part of the Bible. And the idea will be necessarily illustrated and confirmed farther, as we proceed.

If there was perpetually, even in the worst times, a *remnant*, then the Community of Israel never did become, according to the intimation of Paul, as Sodoma, or was made like unto Gomorrah. They never were totally corrupted; nor did they, as a Church, become extinct.

To obviate the objection drawn from the regal government, which commenced in the person of Saul, it may be observed, in addition to what has been already said, that God expressly protested against the introduction of this sort of government, as inconsistent with that holy relation, which subsisted between him, and Israel. He dissuaded them from this experiment; this wanton defection from the covenant; by foretelling the innumerable evils which would ensue; and by portentous testimonials of his displeasure. Therefore, though on the principle of forbearance, he tolerated this defection, with all its attendant abuses, it is to be considered as altogether an innovation. Events proved that it was a rod in the hand of God. It begot divisions, spent itself in desolating wars, facilitated the introduction, and spread of idolatry; and diffused corruption in manners.

But allowing that this adventitious government had a divine sanction, it was a mere modal affair, which respected the external ordering of the society, but did by no means destroy its peculiar character. Some of the kings, at least on the throne of Judah, were pious men, and employed their authority in favor of real religion. The bad kings, and the corruptions they introduced, were condemned, and punished.

War was one of the scourges which God employed to chastise his people. It served to lop off the withered limbs; and to promote, on the whole, the growth, and fruitfulness of the tree.

Idolatry was pursued with unceasing denunciations and judgments. It served, therefore, to prove the holiness of the society, rather than the opposite. Why were apostates to idolatry scourged out of it, but because the society, in itself, was on a purely religious design?

And with respect to the bad character fixed on the Jews by the prophets, great abstractions ought to be made, or our estimate will not be just. It is to be remembered, that the ten tribes, who had renounced the covenant alliance with Judah, and taken separate ground, under Jeroboam and his successors, were, after long forbearance, and the resistance of multiplied means to reclaim them, openly rejected; so that they were no longer counted as of the heritage of the Lord. And with respect to the tribe of Judah, who, with the tribe of Benjamin, and individuals undoubtedly from the other tribes, maintained its Church state; as the leading object of the mission of the prophets, besides foretelling future events, was to reprove wickedness, we ought to consider, that their representations apply to the disobedient only.

The prophets have introduced us into the outer court, rather than into the cleanly, and ornamented apartments of the inner temple. As the counterpart to this view of Zion, in a state of disease; it ought to be considered, how she appeared in her seasons of health and vigor. Though the spirit was not poured out so plentifully, as it has been in the Gospel day, the people of Israel were distinguished from the uncovenanted world, by many seasons of rich refreshings, from the presence of the Lord. That generation which entered the promised land was very generally pious; and so was the generation which succeeded. Seasons of general repentance are mentioned afterwards. The indignation, excited by the abuse done to the concubine of the Levite at Gibeah, proved that a respect to the laws of God, was at that time, by no means, lost among this people. There was a great reformation in Samuel's time. See I. Samuel vii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The grief which was spread when the ark of God was taken; and the joy

with which it was received again; the building and dedication of the temple; the maintenance of its solemn worship; and the general resort of the people to it, as the consecrated place of prayer, and praise; are indications of a considerable prevalence of real piety. The honorable mention, which is often made by God, of this Church is a testimony to the same thing. A very extensive and thorough reformation took place, on the return from the Babylonian captivity. The temple was then rebuilt, and the law put in practice, with singular zeal, and self denial; and we have evidence that there was then, and that there continued even to the coming of the Messiah, a settled abhorrence of idolatry, so that it was no more practised.

The corruption of the visible *Christian* Church, seems as flagrant, and as extensive, as was that of the Jewish. There was one corrupt member in the family of the Savior. There were many such in the days of the Apostles. There were such in the Church at Corinth. And there were such in the Churches of the Lesser Asia, which were planted and superintended by Paul himself.* There have been such in every period since; and there are many such in the visible Church at the present day.

Indeed it is not so easy as some people may imagine, to ascertain the exact boundaries of the visible

* Dr. Gill, in his reply to Clark, presents us this large concession. "It is to be observed, that a large stride, is taken by me from the eleventh to the fourth century; not being able, in the space of more than six hundred years, to find *one instance* of an opposer of infant baptism." He subjoins, "This will not seem strange to those who know what a time of ignorance this was; partly through the prevalence of popery, and partly through the inundation of the barbarous nations, which brought a flood of darkness upon the Empire, and very few witnesses arose against the superstitions of the Church of Rome." Thus it appears from Dr. Gill, one of the most learned opposers of Pœdobaptism, that for more than 600 years of the Christian era, he is not able to find a single person, with whom strict baptists could hold Christian fellowship. A hard case this for them to manage! A hard case too, for those who have temerity enough to attempt to trace up the history of Antipœdobaptism, to the days of the Apostles! When the Antipœdobaptists, who take delight in sinking the religious character of primitive Israel, shall be able to demonstrate the perpetuity of the real spiritual Church of Christ, through these awfully dark and corrupt centuries, in which not even a *remnant* is to be found, in a manner which shall be clear of all difficulties; it may be presumed, the principles will be furnished, for proving, the possibility at least, of the continuance of Israel, as a religious society, from the Exodus to the coming of Christ.

Church. No two persons would perhaps entirely agree on this subject. As there are hypocrites, there will be corruptions and defections in the purest Churches on earth. Matthew xiii. 47, 48. "Again the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a net, which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." The separation will be made at the day of judgment. Till then, the mixture, in spite of the most industrious discipline, will remain.

It is possible to narrow the boundaries of the Church, in each dispensation of it, too much. To avoid laxness, we should not run into bigotry, or severity. The prudent physician, will try every expedient to heal the diseased limb, before he adopts the painful resolution to cut it off. A man does not become formally dismembered from the christian society, immediately upon his acting an unchristian part. He is still a brother. I. Corinthians v. 11. Forbearance is is to be exercised. Means are to be put in operation to reclaim him. The Society is practically to adopt the language of the God of Zion, "How shall I give thee up Ephraim?" And if this may be the case with respect to one, it may be with respect to a multitude, even a majority. And who shall set limits to the long suffering of God? If God expressly, and repeatedly, call the house of Israel his people, as it is most certain he does, even when a large proportion of them, probably a majority, had swerved from the covenant, and become corrupt; shall we dare to go directly in the face of his declarations, and say, they are *not* his people, because they are thus corrupted? It is certainly more prudent to bow to the divine wisdom, than thus to lean to our own understandings.

The Baptists, whose peculiar system is opposed to that which is exhibited in this Treatise, seem to imagine, and often insinuate, even publicly, that their society is distinguished from the rest of the nominally christian world, as a pure Church. The doctrine of

close communion, upon which they generally practice, holds out this language.

Is such an exclusive appropriation of the holy character just? It is certainly rash, and against evidence to say, as Dr. Gill does, that national Churches are "good for nothing." Has the visible church of the Redeemer no place here? Would universal heathenism be as good? But the close communion doctrine goes farther. It pronounces all dissenting Churches, if Pœdobaptist, good for nothing.* Many corruptions prevail among them indeed. But what reason is there for this discrimination? If entire spiritual purity, in doctrine and practice, be the essential mark of the visible Church, it is apprehended this excluding society itself, will be found good for nothing. Have they no unchristian opinions or practices among them? Have they no corrupt members? We certainly witness disputes among them, on the fundamental articles of Christianity. Many of them are Arminians, and many have become Universalists and Deists. We witness disregard of the sabbath, and neglect of public worship. We observe disunion, litigation, and angry contests between elders and churches, and between brethren and brethren. We witness marks of that covetousness, which is idolatry, in the parsimony with which the public teachers of that denomination, are generallytreated; and even the extinction of some of their Churches, through the mere perverseness of their members. Let us not then be told, with too much vaunting, of the exclusive purity of any denomination; or that there is such a contrast in moral character, between the Jewish and Christian communities, that they cannot be component parts, of the one Church of the living God.

* I am ready to pay a due homage to the candor of Dr. Baldwin, who freely acknowledges the Christian visibility and spirituality of some of our Churches. But how this is reconcileable with the doctrine of close communion, is another question.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Respecting the coincidence of prophecies and facts, in regard to the advent of the Messiah to his people, the Jews; his treatment of them while conversant among them, and the conclusions which are to be drawn from this treatment.*

WE have now come down to the appearance of that extraordinary person, whom the types, predictions, history, and ritual law of the Old Testament, principally respected. The types, history, and ritual law, held forth a general, and uninterrupted testimony, in regard to him. The predictions ascertained particulars. They informed of his descent, of the time, and place, and manner of his appearing, his character, the nature of the work he would accomplish; the station he would publicly take and retain, as Lord over his own house; and theeffects, which would follow the fulfilment of his mediatorial offices. We can take notice of these prophecies, and their fulfilment, no farther than they stand in connexion with the main design of this Treatise. Several predictions have been already introduced, which need not here be repeated, determining the unfailing stability, and pepetuity of Israel, as a holy society. We will now attend to a few others, which determine, that the Messiah should arise in the midst of them as such; and what he was actually to do, in his public ministry, in varying, or dissolving, or perpetuating this society. The first prediction to this effect, to which we shall attend, is that of Jacob, respecting Judah. Geneses xlix. 8—12. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy fathers children shall bow down before thee; Judah is a Lion's whelp; from the prey my son, thou art gone up;

he stooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion: Who shall rouse him up? *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah; nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Binding his foal unto the vine; and his asses colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." This whole prediction is of one character. It bespeaks the preeminent station which the tribe of Judah should hold; its strength, perpetuity, and the spiritual blessings, with which it should be remarkably distinguished.—By Shiloh, it is conceded on all hands, is meant the Messiah.* The prophecy then determines, that this tribe should continue in its preeminence of spiritual glory, *till* he should come; that he should appear in the midst of it; that he should take a conspicuous station among the descendants of Jacob, now remaining in this tribe; and be united to them, as their visible head and king.†

* Le Clerk is a solitary exception. But his rendering is too tautologus to be admitted.

† Very different, and generally unsatisfactory, have been the interpretations, which commentators have given to this famous prophecy; particularly this clause. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." The sceptre and lawgiver, have been interpreted, as having respect to temporal and civil authority. This interpretation makes it necessary, that the tribe of Judah should have and retain, till the appearance of Christ, a civil dominion, not over itself, for that would be an absurdity, nor would it be in agreement with the terms of the prophecy; but over the whole of Israel: And that there should be a succession of individuals in this tribe, as princes, by whom, as the fountain of authority, this dominion should be exercised.

The captivities and degraded state to which the Jews, called so from Judah, the head of the tribe, were subjected, by the Babylonian, and Mediopersian monarchs, Antiochus, and the Roman Caesars, seem to be entirely in contradiction to the prophecy, in this sense of it. The great body of Israel, had besides, for ages, been entirely disconnected from them; and in no respect, subject to their government. It is beyond all the efforts of ingenuity therefore, to shew how the prophecy has been fulfilled upon this construction of it. The cause of the embarrassment, in attemping to shew its fulfilment, is obvious. A system of political ascendancy is supposed, which was not intended. Upon the principle of this Treatise, which is, that a spiritual or religious society only was projected by God, the interpretation of the prophecy is easy, and the fulfilment of it, evident. "In Judah God was known. He chose the Mount Zion which he loved." Here was always found the remnant, according to the election of grace; the society, consisting of the *seed*. Here *the law* was preserved and had its influence, For, "from Zion went forth the *law* and the word of the Lord from

Another prophecy, in agreement with this, and to the same purpose, is presented in the 89th Psalm. Here is recorded God's absolute covenant with David, which has already been quoted at large. We will only introduce two or three verses, which ensure the coming of the Messiah, as the *offspring of* David, his elevation to his throne, and the perpetual dominion he should maintain. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. *His seed* shall endure forever, and *his throne* as the sun, before me; it shall be established forever, as the moon; and as a faithful witness, in heaven." This prediction could not have had respect to a temporal dominion. The seed of David did not enjoy it. It respected the Messiah, his descent through the line of David, his appearance in the particular family of David, and the spiritual government he should assume, and maintain over his own people.

Another prophecy, to this purpose, is in Isaiah, ix. 6. "For *unto us* a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government, and peace, there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*, to *order it*, and to *establish* it, with judgment, and justice, from henceforth, even forever."—Here the Messiah is undoubtedly designed. His peculiar character, as God manifest in the flesh, is described. He was to appear in the midst of the Jews, his people, in the humble form of a child. He was to

Jerusalem." Here the true religion was maintained. Here the public worship of God, was kept up, in its spirituality, and glory; here the holy oracles were secured, and transmitted, as a sacred deposit; here the types were perpetuated; here the light of truth continued to shine; and here is to be traced the genealogical descent of Jesus, the son of Mary. This was the nature of the preeminence, to which the tribe of Judah was destined. A preeminence like this, it continued to enjoy, uninterruptedly, till the Savior came. External depressions were not inconsistent with it. Bishop Newton, who mainly follows Sherlock, in the interpretation of this prophecy, does indeed, endeavor to reconcile it with fact, upon the plan of making it mean no more, than that the tribe of Judah should continue as a tribe, and be governed by judges, or princes, from within itself. But this is irreconcilable with the general tenor of the prophecy, and with fact. This implies no ascendancy above the other tribes; whereas, such an ascendancy is plainly declared. And the very first king over Judah, was from the tribe of Benjamin.

ascend the throne of David his father; not as a temporal prince, but as the king of saints. He was to take into his hands; the management, and ordering of that very kingdom, over which David, as a type of him, had presided. Instead of terminating that kingdom, and setting up an entirely new one, he was to *establish* it; he was to establish it, with judgment, and with justice, even *forever*. If, therefore, this kingdom has failed; if it has been prostrated, by his own hand, or by any agency whatever; and another, of a different character, has been formed, over which he has placed himself as king; he has not executed his mission; and the word of God has become of none effect. Haggai ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill *this house* with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house, shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and *in this place* will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." By the desire of all nations, is unquestionably meant the Messiah. His appearance was to be attended with great changes in the external state of the Jewish people, and among the heathen nations. But notwithstanding these changes, which for the most part would be calamitous, he was to come in full gratification of the expectations of all who waited for redemption in Israel. He was to come to the temple in which they worshipped, and fill it with the glory of his personal presence, and of his mighty works. Malachi, iii. 1. "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to *his temple;* even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit, as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi; and

purge them as gold, and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord, an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah, and Jerusalem, be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." Here we are told, not only of the coming of the Messiah to his temple, but of the effects which should attend his public ministry. He would purify, and purge his people. He would detect, and extirpate the impenitent, and flagitious part of them. To them, the day of his coming, was to be the great, and dreadful day of the Lord; a day of vengeance; a day which should burn as an oven; in which the irreclaimable should be burnt, so that there should not be left of them, either root or branch. Unto those who feared his name, he was to arise. as the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings. They were to be the remnant; and were to go forth, and grow up, as calves of the stall. In agreement with which, was the prophecy of Simeon. Luke ii. 34, 35. "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, behold, this child is set for the fall, and rising again, of many in Israel; and for a sign, which shall be spoken against. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also) *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*" In coincidence with which, was the declaration of John. Matthew iii. 10, 11, 12. "And now also, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire: I indeed, baptize you with water, unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand; and he will thoroughly purge *his floor*, and *gather his wheat into the*

*garner;* but he will burn up the *chaff* with unquenchable fire." Thus the Messiah was to come upon his own floor, disposing of its contents, separating the holy from the vile, as wheat is separated from the chaff, in the fan. The former, as his sheep, he was to carry in his arms, and secure, and nourish, as a faithful shepherd. Over them, as his true Israel, his redeemed, he was to reign gloriously. In them, the kingdom was to be established, and perpetuated. The latter were to be cut down, and destroyed.

Not only was he to *reign* in righteousness; but he was to be *personally righteous.* Isaiah liii. 11. "By his knowledge, shall my *righteous servant* justify many." He was to be a Jew, not by descent only, but by his entire conformity in heart, and action, to the law. He was to be preceded by an extraordinary messenger, denominated Elijah, whose busines it should be, to prepare his way, and announce his approach. Malachi iii. 5, 6. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great, and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers unto the children, and the heart of the children unto the fathers."

Let us now see whether events do not coincide with these prophecies; and whether this coincidence do not determine, that in the Jews, the kingdom of God, was, in fact, perpetuated, at the coming, and under the public ministry of the Messiah, and till he left the world.

When Joseph is told by the angel, that Mary shall have a son of the Holy Ghost, he is directed to call his name Jesus; and the reason given for it is, "for he shall save *his people* from their sins." This phrase, *his people*, evidently had primary respect to that people, among whom he was to arise. Accordingly, to him, is applied by Matthew, Matthew i. 22, 23, the prediction, Isaiah vii. 14. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall

call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God *with us.*" The words of Gabriel to Mary, respecting her son Jesus, are these: Luke i. 32, 33. "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him, *the throne* of his father David; and he shall reign over the *house of Jacob forever;* and of his kingdom, there shall be *no end.*" This passage, in connexion with the former, proves, that the house of Jacob was still existing; that Christ, as its proper king, appeared to place himself at the head of it; and that, as his kingdom, it was to be perpetual. Mary herself, under an evident inspiration, is prompted to say, Luke i. 54. "He hath holpen *his servant* Israel, in remembrance of his covenant; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever." If Israel did not now exist, as it ever had done, as God's *servant;* and was not to be exalted, and perpetuated, in this character, this declaration would not apply. Zacharias also, filled with the Holy Ghost, thus prophecies. Luke i. 68. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited, and redeemed *his people;* and hath raised up an *horn* (a symbol of strength) *for us*, in the house of his servant David." When the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Jesus, it was in these words, remarkably agreeing with the prophecy in Isaiah, quoted a little above. Luke ii. 11. "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Simeon unites his testimony. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of *thy people Israel.*" His genealogical descent, through the line of David, is distinctly traced, both by Matthew and Luke.* Thus he took on him *the seed* of Abraham. And being constituted, Rom. xv. 8, "A minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers;" or the seed, in whom all the promises of the covenant, are yea and amen, he was circumcised the eighth day. The name Jesus, ex-

* This will be admitted by those for whom I write. It is not the design of this Treatise, to obviate deistical cavils.

pressive of his office, was given to him. When the days of his mother's purification were accomplished, he was brought to Jerusalem; and presented, by a solemn dedication, in the temple. As it behoved him to be made, in all things, like unto his brethren, temptation and persecution not excepted, his life was sought by a jealous and cruel king; he was driven into Egypt; was detained there in a kind of bondage; led out of it, in connexion with the death of his persesutors; and conducted to, and put in posession of the land of promise, in a manner remarkably corresponding with the experience of Israel, as a body. Being made under the law, he was in all respects conformed to it. In obedience to the fifth commandment, he was subject to his parents while in his minority. During the whole time, antecedent to his shewing unto Israel, he was, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He had his way prepared before him, when he was about publicly to take possession of the throne of his father David. Mat. iii. 1. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

At the age of thirty years, he ascended the throne of his father David. By an inaugural rite, (which will be explained in a following chapter) the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, in the form of a dove; the testimony, by an audible voice from heaven, that he was God's beloved son; and the witness of John; he assumed the office, and entered upon the discharge of the duties, of his Messiahship. He enters the synagogues; preaches righteousness in the great congregation; applies to himself, publicly, the prophecies respecting the Messiah. He begins to collect followers. He finds Nathaniel, *an Israelite indeed*, in whom there was no guile; John, Andrew, Philip, Simon, Matthew, James, Thomas, Levi, &c. Multitudes soon gather round him, to hear his instructions, and see his mighty works. He feeds them miraculously, heals their diseases, declares to them his glory, and his kingdom. He enters the temple, and scourges out of it those who were pro-

faning it. His fan is in his hand. He separates the holy, from the vile. He comforts and encourages the former. He denounces extermination against the latter. With the former he converses as friends, as real brethren. The latter he reproves and condemns, as brethren in name only; as enemies, who were conspiring his death. To the former he says, Luke xii. 32, "Fear not little flock; for it is your father's good pleasure to give *you* the kingdom." Ib. xxii. 28. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint *unto you* a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," i. e. undoubtedly, the rebellious part of the twelve tribes. For these, his little flock, he thus interceeds. John xvii. "I have manifested thy name, unto the men which thou gavest me *out of the world*, thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. I pray for them, I pray not for the world; but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." To the latter he says, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." These were all descendants from Abraham, his brethren, and visible subjects of his kingdom; those who received, and those who rejected him. For we are told, John i. 11. "He came unto *his own*, and his own received him not; But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons of God*, even to them which believe on his name." In the midst of his affectionate followers, he enters his own city Jerusalem, with that kind of triumph, which suited the spirituality of his dominion, and allows himself to be acknowledged, and that publicly, as the king of Israel. Luke xix. 37. "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude *of the disciples*, began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works, that they had seen, saying,

blessed be *the king* that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." He kept the passover, in careful conformity to his condition as a Jew. To his followers he instituted, and with them he partook of the holy supper. To them he appeared as his real subjects after his resurrection. To them he gave his benediction. With them he left the precious deposit of his word; to them he gave in charge the preaching of his kingdom over the earth, with the promise, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And in their sight he ascended up into heaven.

This detail may be thought superfluous. But it is an appeal to facts, as coincident with the representations which have been given in the preceding chapters, and the prophecies which went before, respecting the Messiah, and his kingdom. In these facts, we see him uniting himself formally and publicly, to the Jews, as his people. We see the different effects of his ministry upon those who believed; and upon those who believed not. We witness the solemn manner in which, in his declarations, intercessions, and public treatment of them, he separates between those who are Israel, and those who are only of Israel. We behold him gathering his loyal subjects around him, as that kingdom, of which he is head; and which he was to order and establish forever. We behold him ordering it, and establishing it, accordingly; and leaving the world, as its public protector, with his benediction resting upon it. Here is not the least appearance of the termination of one kingdom, over which he had presided, and setting up a new one, over which, as a society of a distinct character, he was to preside in future. Had Christ excluded the whole of the Jewish people, from being connected with himself, as Messiah, and united himself to the Gentiles only; then there would have been some reason, to think favorably of such an idea. Though it would not have followed, even then, that an absolutely new kingdom was instituted. Because it is evident a kingdom may

change its subjects, without being dissolved. But we see it is exactly otherways. The seed of Abraham, are the persons exclusively, to whom Christ's public ministry is addressed, to whom he is visibly united, and of whom his kingdom consists, when he finally leaves the world. The subjects of this kingdom are all, at this time, native Jews.

But there is supposed to be a difficulty in the way of admitting this conclusion, from the manner in which our Savior speaks, frequently, of the kingdom of heaven. He says, Mat. iv. 17. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is *at hand.*" Again x. 7. "And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is *at hand.*" He says, xi. 11. "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." This manner of expression is supposed to teach, that the kingdom of the Messiah was not yet set up; but was to be a matter of future establishment. The phrases, *kingdom of heaven*, and *kingdom of God*, seem to be used in the Gospel as of equivalent meaning. But this meaning is not uniformly the same. Sometimes, and more generally, the phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, intends the state of the Church, in this world, sometimes its state in the next; but always respects, as far as I have observed, the state of the church subsequent to Christ's appearance upon earth, as its visible head. This kingdom is certainly distinguishable from the gospel itself. Because the gospel *of the* kingdom is frequently mentioned. This phraseology supposes, that the Gospel, and the kingdom, are two things. The Gospel is the intelligence communicated. The intelligence is, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The original word translated *at hand*, is ηγγικε; and signifies local nearness, rather than nearness in regard to time. And it is certain, this kingdom, is often spoken of by our Savior, as already in existence. An example of it we have, Mat. xi. 12. "And from the days of John the baptist even until now, the kingdom

of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It must have existed, or it could not have been a subject of this violence. It must be admitted, that the observation of Christ, in the verse before this, respecting John the baptist, implies, that he (John) was not in the kingdom of heaven. But will any one contend, that he was not in the kingdom of the Messiah? Certainly he was a subject of this kingdom. Promises, predictions, and facts, as they have been already called into view, prove, that it had long existed, and that it would not be discontinued. And it is not pretended that there are two kingdoms, over which Christ maintains a mediatorial government. He is head over all things unto *the Church*. This is his one body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all. The phrase then, kingdom of heaven, must have an appropriate meaning. And it seems to intend, Zion, at a particular period of her existence; in her greater enlargement, spirituality, light, and beauty; derived from the Redeemer's presence, and instructions, and the more abundant effusions of the Holy Ghost, which were to be given. The day of the Messiah was to be, and in fact was, a luminous day, far beyond any preceding parallel. Motives were multiplied, types were answered, the leading promises of the former dispensation were fulfilled; the Messiah was come; the spirit was richly given, and grace was glorified. So great was this augmentation of glory, to which the Church was raised, as to justify the figurative representation of the prophet, Isaiah. xxx. 26. "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven dsys, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." This was somewhat *like* the setting up of a new kingdom, yet it was in fact only the *increase* of one long established.*

* "John the forerunner of Christ, was the first who administered baptism, under the new dispensation." Baldwin on Baptism, page 193. Perhaps I do not rightly apprehend what Dr. Baldwin means here by new dispensation. At any rate this position implies, that the dispensation was in existence prior to John's beginning to baptize.

Again it is objected, that the prophecy of Dainel, Dan. ii. 44, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, &c." implies the erection of a kingdom, original, and new; and, as this kingdom is acknowledged to be the kingdom of the Messiah, under the latter dispensation, this kingdom cannot be a continuity of the Israelitish Church. This Dr. Baldwin has advanced as an argument against the sameness of the Jewish and Christian Churches. The whole force of the argument depends upon the words *set up*. If these terms mean, *to found originally*, there is some plausibility in the argument. But demonstration lies against this interpretation. The whole current of scripture, and facts, in perpetual succession, forbid it. As *making* a covenant, in scripture phraseology, according to the concession of Dr. Gill, sometimes means, only the *renewing*, or *farther confirming* a covenant already established, why may not *setting up* a kingdom, mean merely, *the exaltation*, and *greater extension* of a kingdom, already in existence? On consulting the Seventy, I find the original word translated, set up, rendered by them *ανασησει*; and Poole renders it *suscitabit*. Chrysostom renders it into the very same word. (Suscitabit Deus celi regnum.) Schrevellius renders *ανιστημι*, *excito*; and Williams, in his Concordance, by the English verb, *to arise*. Neither of these renderings suggests the idea of originating a thing as entirely new. The passage, therefore, exhibits no proof against the theory we have established.

But Dr. Balwin imagines that there is proof, that Christ did originate a kingdom, as an entirely new

After noting so far, I am astonished to find at the bottom of the page, that "John was sent *to introduce* the new dispensation of the Savior." Thus he was to introduce it, and yet baptized *under it*. So difficult it is to find when this supposed new kingdom began to be. If the advocates of the opinion that an entirely new kingdom was now set up by Jesus, in the persons of his first followers, and when they were collected as such, will turn to Luke, xxii. 18, they will find, I think, decisive proof that their opinion is erroneous. "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine *until the kingdom of God shall come*." This was at the institution of the supper, on the very night in which Christ was betrayed. Yet he speaks of the kingdom of God as *to come*, a future event. If this phrase means a new kingdom to be originally erected, why then, the kingdom of the Messiah, had not even now an existence. This construction must be given up. It involves gross contradictions.

thing, from the fact, which I have introduced to prove the contrary; viz. that he gathered disciples, and placed himself at the head of them, in distinction from the body of unbelieving Jews. The question is, What were these disciples anterior to their being thus collected? Did they belong to the heathen world? Were they not all native Jews? Were they not of the visible people of God, the Israel whom he loved, and redeemed? Is there not demonstration that some of them at least, and much reason to conclude, that nearly all of them, were subjects of real religion? Was not this the case with John and his disciples? Was it not the case with Joseph, and Mary, and Simeon, and Anna, Zacharias, and Elizabeth? And why should it not be supposed to have been the case with many others? Some we are told believed in Christ, who did not confess him; i. e. did not publicly follow him. Now to what society did these persons belong? Why the evasion is, that they belonged to the *nation* of the Jews; a nation, in the civil acceptation of that term. But we have proved that Israel was not a nation, in this sense; that it was a religious society, of which Christ was the immediate head. When he came to *his own*, he did not come to subjects of a civil government; but to those who stood in visible relation to him by the bonds of the Abrahamic covenant. It is true, as Dr. Baldwin says, that a large proportion of the Jews hated Christ, and rejected him; that he did not consult their pleasure, or act in concert with them. What then? Still they were his own, just as hypocrites in the Church are now. "He came unto *his own*; and *his own received him not.*" They were his subjects; but they proved themselves to be rebellious subjects, just as a multitude of their fathers had been; and were cut off accordingly. If they had not been his, he could not have cut them off. All that the Savior did, therefore, in thus separating the holy from the vile, proves, that a kingdom was not now originally formed. Let my brother, and let the reader remember, that the Messiah was to *order*, and *establish* forever, a kingdom, already existing. To

purge, and purify, and exonerate, in this manner, was to *order* and *establish*. But to set up an entirely new kingdom, would be quite a different thing. The principle here contended for, as a matter of fact will be much confirmed as we proceed. I will therefore detain the reader no longer in this place.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Respecting the rejection of the unbelieving part of Israel, and the translation of the Messiah's kingdom into the Gentile world, in which the union of believing Jews and Gentiles, under his immediate reign, is illustrated.*

UNDER the ministration of Christ, we have seen a part of the Jewish people, following him as their king, and acknowledged by him as the sheep of his fold. In them we have seen his kingdom perpetuated, ordered, and established. We have seen another part, and this the largest, hardened in impenitence and unbelief, rising up in rebellion against their own Messiah, refusing his claims, and fatally casting him out of the vineyard. We are now to see how these two portions of the Jewish people are disposed of. We will begin with the unbelieving part. Upon them, Christ, during his ministry, fixed uncommon, and as it would seem, with respect to the most of them, unpardonable guilt. "If I had not spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." Mat. xxiii. 31. "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers; Ye serpents, ye *generation* of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Upon them especially, must have rested the awful denunciations of their lawgiver Moses, Deut. xxviii. 6, and on. "And it shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought, and to pluck you off from the good land, whither ye go to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto

the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou, nor thy fathers have heard, even wood, and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there, trembling of heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, &c." The anterior captivities were but preludes to this awful extirpation. At the close of the prophecy of Isaiah, in connexion with the promise, "For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain, before me, so shall *your seed*, and *your name remain*," (which, by the way, absolutely secures the perpetuity of Israel beyond the effects of this extirpation) it is declared, "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses *of the men, that have transgressed against me*, for their worm shall not die, nor shall their fire be quenched. And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." See also Mal. last chapter, 1st verse. The solemn warning of John the baptist, though it has been already introduced, deserves in this connexion to be noticed. Mat. ii. 7. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from *the wrath to come?* Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, &c. And now also the ax is laid at the root of the trees. *Every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.*" Jesus follows up and confirms these denunciations, as applicable to, and about to be executed upon, those who denied him. He predicts the utter demolition of their temple; the treading down of Jerusalem, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon the people; that these wicked enemies of his, who would not that he should reign over them, after having cast him out of the vineyard, and slain him, shall continue to persecute him in his loyal subjects, till a final period is put to their visible state,

as the people of God, and they are driven, by unparalleled judgments, from off the good land which God had given to them ; an event which is most evidently intended by *the end*, which was to come before that generation entirely passed away. After the passage from Mat. xxiii, which I have just quoted, as expressive of their great guilt, he subjoins this solemn testimony. " Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify ; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood, shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple, and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon *this generation*. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This is the prophetic destiny of the unbelieving Jews, under which they were to remain, as cut off branches, till the second coming of Christ. Events have exactly coincided with these denunciations. The converts, which were afterwards made by the preaching of the Apostles, excepted, they were in fact extirpated, in one form or another, from the land of their inheritance. Hundreds of thousands of them fell a sacrifice to their public enemies. Multitudes became victims to each other's cruelty. Their temple was burnt to the ground, their city rased, their country desolated, and the miserable fugitives were scattered into the four winds. The blessing no longer attached itself to them, nor was it transmitted to their descendents. They were no longer of the visible seed. According to the declaration of the Apostle, " wrath came upon them to the uttermost." The

vail of unbelief was thenceforth upon their hearts; and they are now, as nauseous carcasses, an abhorrence to all flesh. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God! on them which fell, severity."

Let us now consider the disposal of those, who, as loyal subjects, followed their king. This we shall find to have been altogether the reverse of the other.

Here we are to recollect the many promises which had been made of the unceasing continuance of the *name* and the *seed* of Israel, some of which have been called into view, and need not here be repeated. We are to recollect that the Messiah was to be a horn of salvation, (a symbol of invincible strength) *to his people Israel;* and that, being on the throne of David his father, he was to order and establish his kingdom forever. And we are to recollect, that the zeal of the Lord of hosts was pledged to do this.

Accordingly we see this very kingdom of the Messiah going down the lapse of time; and, with irresistible progress, triumphing over all opposition, even in our own day. We see it surviving the general wreck of Empires, and about to rise upon the entire ruins of them all, as an eternal excellency, the perfection of beauty.

At the time of Christ's ascension, this kingdom consisted of a pretty large number of subjects. For, after his resurrection, he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once. These could be but a part, of the whole number, of his adherents. Some of these five hundred, were alive when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, about twentysix years afterwards. See the 15th chap. of that Epistle. To these, of whatever number they might consist, under the preaching of Peter, at the Pentecost, were added about three thousand souls. Acts. ii. 41. These were all native Jews; as were those to whom they were added. Peter addressed them as such. And the Gospel was not yet preached, either by Christ or his apostles, to the Gentiles. These continued daily, with one accord, in the temple; the principal place of worship, for the Church, since the

days of Solomon. They, with their fellow believers, were *the Church*. For it is said in the last verse of the chapter. "And the Lord added *to the Church*, daily such as should be saved." We have here then undeniably the Church of Christ, consisting altogether of native Jews, members of the tribe of Judah, and the seed of Abraham. To this Church, mention is made in the 4th chap. 4th verse, of the addition of about five thousand more believers. These also were native Jews. Afterwards, Acts v. 14. that, "believers were the more added to the Lord; *multitudes*, both of men and of women." These also were Jews. In the 6th chap. 7th verse, is an additional testimony to the still greater augmentation of the Church. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem, *greatly*; and *a great number of priests* were obedient to the faith."

The apostles, and leading brethren of the Church, were soon after this, dispersed, by a violent persecution, through the regions of Judea and Samaria. But, "they that were scattered abroad, went every where, (still however within the limits of those regions; and their labours appear to have been confined, even in Samaria, to the Jews) preaching the word."

We have now arrived to the time, when the ingathering of the Gentiles began; a period of great importance, not as terminating the kingdom of the Messiah; but as involving a great change in the actual state of that kingdom. By this event, the system of adoption, which was wrought into the Abrahamic covenant, as an essential part of the economy of the kingdom, was carried into extensive effect; the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down; and the kingdom removed from its local position, into the midst of an immense people, hitherto sitting in the region and shadow of death. This event, therefore, claims a careful consideration. But before we enter upon it, that nothing essential to the economy may be left in doubt, I deem it expedient to subjoin farther evidence, deduced from the Epistles, that the Church, whose history

we have so far traced, is in fact a continuance of Israel, as a society; and that this society was continued long after the accession of the Gentiles. Perhaps it is superfluous. But on a subject of so much practical importance, and such diversity of opinion, the reader will pardon an accumulation of evidence, which to him may seem needless.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Church at Rome, which, as it would seem, from several passages in it, consisted partly of Jews, and partly of Gentiles; an epistle supposed to have been written about seven and twenty years after Christ's ascension, expressly teaches the continuance of the true Israel, in the believing Jews, who then existed; and in distinction from the unbelieving Jews, who were hardened, and cast away, as vessels of wrath. Rom. ix. 22, 23, 24. "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known; endured with much long suffering, *the vessels of wrath*, fitted to destruction. And that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the *vessels of mercy*, which he had prepared unto glory. *Even us*, whom he hath called, *not of the Jews only*, but also of the Gentiles." These believing Jews were called, and made vessels of mercy. In the 27th verse, the Apostle tells us, they were *the remnant* of Israel. "Esaias also, crieth concerning *Israel*, though the number of the children of *Israel* be as the sand of the sea, *a remnant* shall be saved." This prediction he considers as fulfilled, in the persons of those then existing believing Jews, of whom he was one. This idea he resumes in the beginning of the eleventh chapter. "I say then, hath God cast away *his people?* God forbid. For I also am an *Israelite*, of the *seed* of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." *They still remain his people, by the same covenant bonds, in which they had ever been allied to him.* He adds in the 5th verse. "Even so then, *at this present time, there is a remnant*, according to the election of grace. The same idea he inculcates by the similitude of an olive tree, verse 16.

"And if the root be holy, so are the branches." It is continued verse 17. "And if some of the branches were broken off." This implies that some of them remained. Let the olive tree therefore, introduced by Paul in this place, represent what it may, this clause undeniably proves, that the believing Jews held precisely the same character, and relation, with their earliest progenitors; or with Abraham, in whom their society was founded.

As there is much evidence of the point before us in this figure of the olive tree; and as we shall have occasion to make a farther use of it in this chapter, and in the subsequent parts of this Treatise, it is necessary we should determine here what the Apostle designed it should represent. To settle this matter, we must resolve the question, from what were the unbelieving Jews broken off? The branches that are supposed to be broken off, it is conceded on all hands, represent them. The tree, therefore, must represent *that*, whatever it be, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off.

It is contended by some, that this was *the enjoyment of Gospel means, and offers.* Thus Dr. Jenkins, in his Defence of the Baptists, page 63, says, "No doubt the Jews had those *outward advantages*, that the Gentiles, who were wild, had not." And page 66, "But to the participation of Gospel blessings, in a Gospel Church state, with the Jews who believed; but *from which* the Jews who believed not, were broken off."* Thus also Mr. Andrews observes, in his Vindication, page 12. "The representation which Paul meant to to communicate by the metaphor of the olive tree, is *simply the opportunity, or proffer* of salvation, by Jesus Christ," page 14. "In consequence of their having rejected the proffer of salvation, they were broken off

* Is it then true, that the unbelieving Jews were once in "a Gospel Church state?" When? In what is called the Christian Church? Then, undoubtedly, the Christian Church is but a continuity of the Jewish Church. For it is certain they never were members of the former, as a distinct society from the latter. In what is called the Jewish Church? Then that was a Gospel Church. So do errorists, in spite of themselves, get entangled in the truth.

from those privileges which they had, *or might have enjoyed.*"* But the fact is, they have never been broken off from these privileges, and proffers. They have still the whole of the Old Testament scriptures in their hands. And those of the new, are in the hands of some of them, and at the command of all. The Gospel was preached to them, even in Judea, years after this Epistle was written. It has been preached to them in every age since. At this day, wherever they are dispersed, through Europe, Asia, and America, salvation is, with greater or less clearness, overtured to them. Conversions are, in fact, made from among this people. How are they made? Without opportunity, and without the proffer of salvation? Then faith does not come by hearing, nor hearing by the word. By what means is the promise, that they shall be graffed in again, to be executed? Must it not be by the ministration of the word? Gospel advantages and means, must be brought to them *prior* to their being graffed in. Therefore, they must be enjoyed *while* they are broken off. An interpretation, which is absurd in itself, and contradicted by undeniable facts, cannot be admitted.

2. That from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, cannot be Jesus Christ, personally and separately considered, as an object of faith and hope. This is the account which Dr. Baldwin gives of the olive tree, in his last publication, page 240. "By the good olive tree, therefore, we rather think, Christ himself is intended." But this interpretation leads him at once into a sad self-contradiction. For, putting the question, which he perceived would immediately arise in the reader's mind, "If so, it may be asked, how can

* "Or might have enjoyed." What! broken off from something to which they never were united? But Mr. Andrews endeavors to defend this, by an appeal to the words of Christ. "There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves *thrust out.*" But this is a poor defence. For these persons were, in fact, in the kingdom of God. What absurdity, to speak of their being thrust out, unless they had been previously in? A parallel place we have in Matthew viii. 12, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out &c."

it be said, that the unbelieving Jews were branches (as they must have been in some sense) or they could not be broken off?" He answers, "They were so considered in consequence of their *visible profession.* As a nation, they professed to be his people." Then the nation of the Jews, were a nation of *professing Christians.* This is either to concede every thing to us; that the nation of the Jews was the visible kingdom of the Messiah; or it is a declaration without any meaning. If by professing people, be intended, that they were professed believers in Christ, as the twelve disciples were, this is notoriously contrary to fact. For, from first to last, they openly rejected him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him *not.*" They did not receive him by any kind of visible submission; but perpetually opposed, and at last crucified him. Besides, How could they be cut off from a visible profession? A man may profess as long as he lives, let him be in one state or another. Did the thousands of unbelieving Jews now existing, ever make such a profession? Certainly not. No part of the world, have been more openly inimical to Jesus, than this people.

3. That from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, was not the society of the elect, as such, or those who, according to God's eternal predestination, become enriched with the adoption of sons. For these all are branches which abide in the vine, and must infallibly be saved. They are vessels of mercy, toward whom, this severity is not shewn.

4. It does not seem satisfactory to say, with Mr. Peter Edwards, that the olive tree represents simply *a visible Church state.* It is not denied, it is one of the principles of this Treatise, that some of these unbelieving Jews were in a visible Church state, and cut off from it by open unbelief. And dismemberment in this sense is undoubtedly involved in that dispensation by which they were *broken off.* But does a simple, visible Church state, come up fully to the idea conveyed by the metaphor of the olive tree? Does this state

comprehend the *fatness* of which the believing Gentiles partake ? Does it distinguish *living*, from *nominal* Christians ? Are all who are in this state subjects of saving faith ? Is this, and this only, the state into which the unbelieving Jews are to be grafted again ? Is this all that is implied in the effect of the vail's being taken from the heart, and their turning to the Lord ? Would the salvation of all Israel follow of course ? I confess myself not satisfied with this explanation. And am constrained, therefore, to adopt another idea, viz,

5. *That* from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off was the *Society of Israel*, without any respect to the distinction of visible and invisible membership. Let this matter be a little explained. It has appeared from passages, which have been introduced, and there are a multitude of others of a like kind, that Israel, as an entire community, is often addressed under the notion of a single person. "Moreover he will bring upon *thee* all the diseases of Egypt, which *thou* wast afraid of, and they shall cleave unto *thee*." This language expresses a complete unity. All over the scripture, injunctions, predictions, promises, and threatenings are addressed to this society, in the second person singular, as though it were an individual, existing through the succeesive periods of time. This mode of speaking, while it marks the identity and unity of the Society with peculiar force, seems to exclude the distinction of visible and invisible membership, though it really exists. In a manner corresponding with which, our Lord says, John xv. 1, 2. "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." 5th verse, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Here the Savior identifies his followers with himself; all of them without distinction. He and his people are one person, as much as the vine and the branches are one vine. Yet some of these followers of his, who are in him, according to the metaphor, as much, and in the same sense, as the

others, are dead, unproductive branches. The others are vigorous. They partake of the life and fatness of the vine, and bear fruit. The vine, and the olive tree are evidently parallel figures. They both represent subjects of which unity is predicated. The olive tree, then, as used by the Apostle, must be designed to represent Israel, as a body, without any respect to visible and invisible membership, in regard to individuals. Accordingly Israel simply considered is referred to expressly in the context, without any respect to such a distinction. "And so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, there shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This explanation is confirmed by the nature of the other figure the Apostle introduces. "If the first fruits be holy, the *lump* is also holy." It is agreeable to the introductory verse of the chapter, which is undoubtedly to be used as a key for the opening of the whole chapter. "I say then hath God cast away *his people?*" He doth not distinguish, and say, *visible* or *invisible* people; but people indefinitely, as *one* society. "God forbid." *This people continues.* The explanation is confirmed by the remark of the Apostle in the 25th verse; "blindness, in part, is happened *to Israel;*" (to this one body.) With this explanation, and as far as I can see with no other, the whole process of the metaphor, and the whole context are reconcileable. To Israel the Gentile world is opposed. From the Gentile world, as a wild olive, a body of Idolaters, the believing Gentiles were taken, and inserted into *Israel.* Unbelief is the thing which cuts off from *Israel,* as it ever had done. Gentiles become inserted by faith. *Israel* is, *holiness to the Lord;* and in that respect, i. e. in regard to its peculiar character, and its being the subjest of the blessing, is justly represented by the *fatness* of the olive tree. Abraham and Christ are both of this Israel; the one the Father, the other the seed, to whom ultimately the promises were made; and in whom they are yea and amen. The unbelieving Jews, were natural branches of this one tree; or naturally belonged to

Israel, as they descended from this common stock. When they shall cease to be unbelievers, they shall be brought into *Israel* again, and take their natural position. But if this shall be true of them, and we have the absolute promise of God that it shall, certainly Isreal will be in being, as the original stock, into which they may be reinserted.*

If the reader should be satisfied with this explanation of the figure of the olive tree, he will agree, that it is undeniable proof, of the continuity of the ancient Isreal, as the spiritual inheritance of Jehovah. If he should not, still evidence will be furnished, in the connexion, of this truth. No construction can possibly be put upon it, which shall annihilate this evidence. For there are branches which remain, and they stand on the stock on which they originally grew. These are the remnant, in which Israel is perpetuated. If it be supposed that the *Abrahamic covenant* is represented by the olive tree, this will result in the same conclusion. For Israel, as an indissolvable society, is established upon that covenant.

Another passage, proving the actual continuity of Israel, is found in the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, at the beginning. The writer of this Epistle, generally supposed to be Paul, is addressing himself to believing descendants from Abraham. To them he says, "Wherefore, holy brethern, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle, and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ; who was faithful to him that appointed him; as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as he which hath builded the house, hath more honor than the house." Here Moses is considered as belonging to that one temple of grace, which Jesus Christ has reared. If *he* belonged to it, than did all the true Israel. The Apostle adds in the 6th verse. "But Christ, as a son over his *own house*, (the house is but one) whose house

* Dr. Doddridge seems to coincide with this idea. Though his paraphrase is by no means unambiguous or critical.

*are we*, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Here the Jewish believers, existing at that time, of whom Paul was one, are declared to be Christ's house, built by him as Savior, and to which Moses, and the rest of the pious, of primitive Israel, belonged.

That the first Epistle of Peter was written to believers who originated from the stock of Israel, at least principally, seems evident from many things in the Epistle, and is very generally allowed by Commentators and Critics. Admitting this, farther proof to our purpose will be found, in the 2d chapter, 5th verse, of this Epistle." Ye also as living stones, are built up a *spiritual house*, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. The following verses are coincident with this. The 10th verse may be thought opposed to this idea; but it is entirely reconcileable with it, if we allow, what is not at all improbable, and even seems to be strongly intimated in many passages in this Epistle, that these native Jews, who had been dispersed through the heathen nations, had very much forsaken the religion of their fathers, and partaken of the impieties of those nations.

Presuming that the point of the actual continuity of Israel under the Christian dispensation, and to as recent a period as the history of the scripture carries us, has been fully evinced, I will now proceed to consider the very important subject of the accession of the Gentiles. This event we have seen was provided for in the covenant which God established with Abraham. "I have made *thee a father* of many nations. *In thee* and *in thy seed*, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless him that blesseth *thee*." We have shewn that these promises referred, not only, in the primary and proper sense of the term seed, to lineal descendants from Abraham, as such; but, in a secondary and implied sense, to another kind of seed, the acceding Gentiles, as children of Abraham by adoption.

Let us now see, by comparing posterior prophecies and events, how these promises were accomplished, in the ingathering of the Gentiles. To avoid swelling this volume too much, a few only of the prophecies in point will be quoted. A part of these respect Christ personally; and part of them respect Israel as his kingdom. Let us begin with the former. The first which claims to be noticed, is the famous prophecy of Jacob, respecting Judah. Genesis xlix. 10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come; and *to him shall the gathering of the people be.*" It is true, the Gentiles are not here expressly mentioned; but they are evidently intended. The next prophecy to be noticed, is in the 2d Psalm, 8th verse. "Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance." Another prophecy of a like character occurs in the 72d Psalm. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, (the righteous Israel) and abundance of peace, so long as the sun and moon endureth. He shall have dominion *also*, from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. *They that dwell in the wilderness* shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish, and of the Isles, shall bring presents. The kings of Sheba, and Seba, shall offer gifts. Yea all kings shall bow before him; *all nations shall serve him.*" This cannot intend mere conquest. A voluntary subjection, and service, are undoubtedly intended. Isaiah xi. 10. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, (the Jewish people) *to it* shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest, (Israel) shall be glorious." Ibid xlix. 6. "And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give thee for *a light of the Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." Ibid lx. 1, and 3. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come. And the Gentiles shall come to *thy light.*" Daniel vii. 13, 14. "I saw in the night vis-

ions, and behold, one, like the son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him, dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that *all people*, *nations*, and *languages*, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Malachi i. 11, "For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, *my name* shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place, incense shall be offered unto my name; and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."* Luke ii. 30, 31, 32. "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared *before the face of all people*, a *light to lighten the Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people Israel." John x. 16. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; *them also* I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be *one fold*, and *one shepherd*."

These passages convey an intelligible meaning.—Most undoubtedly they predict the accession of the Gentiles *to Christ*, not as disconnected from Israel, but as in the midst of them; and their acknowledged king.

Let us now attend to some prophecies which foretold, and promised, the ingathering and union of the Gentiles *to Israel*, as a society. Such is the prophecy of Isaiah, ii. 2. "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house, shall be established above the tops of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and *all nations shall flow unto it*. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up *to the mountain* of the Lord, *to the house* of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The Gospel is first to be preached by heralds from Israel, and the event of the accession of the Gen-

* That the Messiah is here intended, we have reason to conclude from Exodus xxiii. 20, 21. "——my name is in him."

tiles, is to follow. See also the 49th of the same prophecy, at the 8th verse, and on. "Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time, have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation, have I helped thee. And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that that are in darkness, Shew yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places: They shall not hunger, nor thirst; neither shall the heat, nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my high ways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north, and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim. Sing O heavens; and be joyful O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted. But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste, thy destroyers; and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee." All this is said of Zion, then existing, to whom the prophecy was immediately addressed. It was said, respecting a period to come, a period which was to succeed one of apparent dereliction, which is called *an acceptable time*, and *a day of salvation*. This was the gospel day, as we are informed by the express application of the words to that day, by the apostle. II. Corinthians vi. 1, 2. "We then as workers together with him, beseech you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain, (for he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted; and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, *now is the accepted time;* behold. *now is the*

*day of salvation.")* To all this respecting Zion, the prophet adds, 18th verse, "Lift up thine eyes round about; all these gather themselves together, and come *to thee;* as I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe *thee* with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them *on thee* as a bride doth."

See also again in the same prophet, lx. 4, 5. "Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together; they come *to thee;* thy sons shall come from far; and thy daughters shall be nursed by thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted *unto thee;* the forces of the Gentiles shall come *unto thee.*" Zech. viii. 20, to the end. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities. And the inhabitants of one city, shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily, to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people, and strong nations, shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts, in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even *shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew*, saying, we will go *with* you; for we have heard that God is *with you.*" John xi. 51, 52. "And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophecied that Jesus should die for that Nation; and not for that Nation only; but that also he should gather together *in one*, the children of God that were scattered abroad." This prophecy of Caiaphas, being recorded by the Evangelist, as officially given; and being in agreement with facts, is to be considered as equally authentic with other prophecies.

In exact agreement with these predictions is a clause of the memorable intercessory prayer of Christ, addressed to the Father, just before he suffered; and recorded by John, in the 17th chapter of his Gospel. "Neither pray I for these alone; but *for them also* which

shall believe on me through their word. That they all may *be one*, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be *one* in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect in one.*

Let us now see how the ingathering of the Gentiles agrees with these prophecies.

The commencement of this memorable scene took place in the person, and connexions of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Roman. The account of his conversion is given us in the 10th chapter of Acts. Peter was the instrument of it. A vision, and an extraordinary concurrence of events, were ordered, to impel Peter to this ministry, and to give majesty and notoriety to the event. Peter's preaching was accompanied with a miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost. For, verse 44. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, *as many as came with Peter*, because that on the *Gentiles also* was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in *the name of the Lord.*" Thus were the Gentiles, in the first fruits of them, by equality of gifts and grace, united *to Christ* and *his Israel.* The next accession from the Gentile world is mentioned in the following chapter, 19th verse. "Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene; which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the *Grecians*, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, *and turn-*

*ed unto the Lord.* Then tidings of these things came unto the Church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch; who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and faith; *and much people was added unto the Lord.* Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul." The good man was so overjoyed, he must have his brother Saul, to witness with him, these triumphs of grace over the Gentiles. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass a whole year, they assembled themselves *with the Church*, and taught much people." Thus Zion "*clothed herself*" with the Gentiles. It is added. "And the disciples, were called Christians, first in Antioch." These disciples were correlates of the Jewish disciples. To them however, the name Christian, was first applied. The Jewish disciples had not been called Christians. The Church at Jerusalem, was not called Christian. It was still Israel. It is worth while to notice what follows. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world. Then the disciples, (i. e. the christians in Antioch) every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. Which also they did, and sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Thus, in a public manner, they acknowledged their affiliation.

The next accession to the Church is in Antioch, in Pisidia, under the ministry of Saul and Barnabas; who had been, by a special designation, ordained to a mission among the Gentiles. Of the converts who were made in this Antioch, who were partly Jews, but principally Gentiles, it is testified; "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." During this first mission among the Gentiles, numerous

converts were made successively, at Iconium, Lystra, and several other cities. For it is said; Acts xiv. 23. "And when they had ordained them elders *in every Church*, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Thus were these Churches collected and organized, by missionaries from the Mother Church in Judea.

The mission of Paul and Barnabas, with certain others to the Church in Jerusalem, on the subject of circumcision, as the metropolis of the Holy kingdom; their consultation, and reply; and the joyful acceptation of it, by the Gentile Christians in Antioch, mightily confirm the doctrine, that a new kingdom was not now set up among the Gentiles; but that the believing Gentiles did merely accede, and unite themselves to a kingdom already existing, in the persons of believing Jews. Next the Gospel was propagated, and Churches formed and organized, in Greece, and Macedonia. But it is not necessary to pursue the history of the accession of the Gentiles any farther. This accession of the Gentiles, it will be perceived, exactly coincides with, and is in fulfilment of the promises wrought into the Abrahamic covenant, and made in prophecy to the Messiah and to his Zion. They correspond with the declarations and with the prayer of Christ, relative to this event.

We have only to notice farther, two or three passages in the Epistles which speak of the incorporation of the Gentiles into the Israel of God. The allegorical representation of Paul in the 11th of Romans, which has already been under our view, will here readily occur to us. It hath appeared, that by the olive tree, Israel is represented as one indissolvable society. Into this society, as an original stock, the Gentiles are represented by Paul, as engraffed. Being engraffed, they are borne, just like the remaining natural branches, by the root, and partake of the fatness of the olive tree. All the blessings of the covenant are a common inheritance, and descend to the one sort of believers as richly as to the other. That the Gentile

believers did accede to Israel, and that their conversion was in fulfilment of the promises of the covenant of circumcision, is plainly asserted in the 15th chapter of this Epistle; beginning at the 8th verse. "Now this I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers, *and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*; as it is written, For this cause, I will confess to thee, *among the Gentiles*, and sing unto thy name.* And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles *with his people*." Thus, Christ is the executor of the promises of the covenant, in the conversion of the Gentiles. Its promises did then, in part, terminate upon the Gentiles. And they are placed with the believing Jews, under that one covenant. In perfect agreement with which, is Paul's observation in the 4th chapter of this Epistle, 11th verse. "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal, &c. *that he might be the Father of all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Conformably he says, in his epistle to the Galatians; iii. 9. "So then, they which are of faith, are blessed *with faithful* Abraham." "Also 29th verse. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs, according to the promise." See how undeniably the system of adoption is actually carried out, in the accession of the Gentiles.

This union of believing Jews and Gentiles, is brought into view by this same Apostle, in I. Corinthians, xii. 18. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized *into one body*, *whether we be Jews* or *Gentiles*, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit."

I will trouble the reader with but two more quotations. They are both found in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The one is in the 1st chap. 9, and 10 verses. "Having made known unto us, the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; *that in the dispensation of*

*the fulness of times*, (the Gospel day) he might gather together *in one*, all things in Christ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Mr. Locke is of the opinion, that by "things in heaven, and things on earth," is meant, Jews and Gentiles. There is much reason to think his opinion is correct. If so, then the passage is peculiarly to our purpose. And then the 6th verse of the 2d chapter, as the Apostle is addressing the Gentile converts, will cogently illustrate the idea we are upon. "And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." *εν ουρανοις*. The same words in the original which are used in the other verse.—How indeed, can any other admissible interpretation be put upon the words? In what heavenly places are Gentile converts called to sit together, but in the Church of Israel? The scope of this Epistle, and especially the following context, favors this interpretation, and seems to make it necessary. A consideration of this context, will bring us to the other quotation intended. It begins at the eleventh verse, and reaches quite to the end of the chapter. This whole passage is so much to our purpose, that I shall take leave to quote the whole of it. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision, by that which is called circumcision in the flesh, made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh, by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make, in himself, of twain, *one new man*, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God, in *one body*, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came, and

preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that are nigh. For through him we both have an access by one Spirit, unto the Father. Now therefore, ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the saints, and of the houshold of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit."

This passage scarce needs a comment. By being brought nigh, is evidently to be understood, being brought by adoption to the Messiah, who is enthroned king over Israel, therefore into the family of Israel. By the *one new man*, is plainly intended, not an absolutely new society, as Dr. Jenkins, absurdly, and against the whole current of scripture, contends; but Israel new modified, by the immense addition of Gentile believers. The terms used in the verse, to which this clause belongs, imply this. A Society cannot be dissolved by accessions which are made to it, let them be ever so numerous. It is rather strengthened and perpetuated by this accession.

The other phrases in the passage, in one body—household of God—an holy temple—an habitation of God through the Spirit--coincide with, and confirm this idea.

It is justly said by Mr. Peter Edwards, that "the terms, *both* and *us*, mean Jews and Gentiles; that a partition, is that which separates one society, or family, from another; and that the breaking down of the partition wall, brings the two societies, or families, into one.

A wide and effectual door being thus opened for the Gentiles, and the propagation of the Gospel among them, being accompanied with abundant effussions of the Holy Spirit; the children of the desolate soon became more numerous, by far, than those of the married wife.

Unparalleled judgments spread themselves over Judea, defacing the Country, wasting its inhabitants, terminating the public exercises of religion; forcing the most of the unbelieving Jews, whom the sword did not destroy, to fly into other parts of the world, and of course, subjecting to exile, many even of the followers of the Lamb.

These circumstances necessarily involved a translation of the Church from the position it held, while the tabernacle was yet standing, into the territories of the Gentiles. Among believers, as an effect of this translation, the name of Jew was gradually lost, and gave place to that of Christian. National distinctions, were absorbed, in the unity of the brotherhood. There was neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. No man was known after the flesh; but Christ was all in all.

This translation resulted from the necessity of the case. It was impossible that the numerous Gentiles, who were to come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, should resort to Judea, and subsist within its narrow limits. It was indeed impossible, that the strength of the Church should remain collected there, while the viols of divine wrath were pouring out upon the reprobate Jews. And it was the pleasure of God, that impious Gentiles, should have this land, for a while, under their power.

This translation was also necessary, to the accomplishment of God's ultimate purposes of grace. In no other way could the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. In no other way could the devil be dispossesed of his usurpations. In no other way could the heathen be given to Christ, for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, for his possession. In short, in no other manner could the promises of God's gracious covenant, receive their complete fulfilment.

This translation of the kingdom, was in agreement with what Christ testified to the incorrigible Jews,

who rejected his instructions. Matthew xxi. 43. "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof." Dr. Jenkins indeed says, that the phrase, *the kingdom of God*, is to be found no where in the Old Testament. Be it so. There are phrases entirely equivalent with it. Such are: "And ye shall be unto me *a kingdom of priests*, an holy nation—his kingdom is an *everlasting kingdom*—and the saints of the Most High shall take *the kingdom.*" The phrase, kingdom of God, as used by our Savior, evidently corresponds with the vineyard in the parable, of which it is the application. What does the vineyard represent? Let the scripture be its own interpreter. Isaiah v. 7. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is *the house of Israel.*" What then can be intended by the kingdom of God? This author says, and the construction Baptist writers generally adopt, "By the kingdom of God, our Lord certainly meant, *the Gospel.*" Defence, page 63. But he contradicts this idea before he has finished his paragraph. For he says, "But this kingdom was set before them by the preaching of the Gospel." Can he mean that the Gospel was set before them, by the preaching of the Gospel? The Gospel is the declaration. It is good news, glad tidings of great Joy. These tidings announce something. What is it? The rising kingdom of the Messiah. By the kingdom of God then, is certainly meant, something entirely distinguishable from the Gospel. It is that kingdom, over which the Savior reigns; whose history is given us in the Old and New Testament. This kingdom was, in fact, taken, as has been proved, from the midst of the unbelieving Jews, and the position it had previously held in the land of promise, and given to the Gentiles. In them, in connexion with the remnant of primitive Israel, as its subjects, it was perpetuated. It is not a fact that the Gospel was taken from the unbelieving Jews. For the apostle, treating on this very subject, Romans xi. after he had mentioned their exclusion, says, "For I

speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." This language intimates, that he expected and calculated, that the instructions which he was now communicating, would come to their knowledge. But what reason for this calculation, if a judicial act had separated them finally from all knowledge of Gospel truth?

That the idea which has been given of the kingdom, which was to be taken from the unbelieving Jews, and given to the Gentiles, is correct, is proved by several corresponding passages. I will stay to mention but one. This is in the 17th of Luke. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come; he answered, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo, here; or lo, there; for behold, the kingdom of God is within you, (εν υμιν) in the midst of you, or among you." Certainly the Pharisees, in their habits of speaking, attached a distinct idea to the phrase, the kingdom of God, and of this kingdom they had gotten their idea from the prophetic writings. The subject to which they applied this phrase was no other than the kingdom of their expected Messiah.—The question itself imports this. The answer of our Lord is in conformity to this idea. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." *The advent of the kingdom of which you speak, is not attended with that external pomp which your proud imaginations have fancied. This kingdom is of a spiritual nature. And I tell you that it is in the midst of you.*

## CHAPTER X.

*Respecting John's ministry, and baptism; and the baptism which was administered by John to the Messiah.*

THE nature of John's office, and baptism, is to be learned from his character, his mission, and the effects of his ministry. Here we must have recourse to prophecy. The prophetic designation of John, is found in Isaiah xl. 3, 4, 5. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert, a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Also in Malachi iii. 1. "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." He is intended by Elijah the prophet, in the 5th verse of the 4th chapter. The effects of his ministry are described in the 6th verse. "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

John's office then, was to prepare the way of the Messiah. This was to be done morally; by effecting a reformation in Israel. It was to be done also, by announcing his approach, and pointing him out, when he should actually appear; by recognizing his Messiahship, and asserting his dignity, and glory. Accordingly we find his preaching to have been, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The *Messiah is coming to fulfil the promises made to the fathers. Pre-*

*fare to meet him, by forsaking your sins. For you must be holy, to receive rightly so holy a character.* His baptism is expressly called by Paul, Acts xix. 4. "The baptism of repentance." The subjects of the reformation wrought, in connexion with their baptism, openly confessed their sins." Mat. ii. 6. "And were baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins.*" "He came *for a witness*, to bear witness of *that light.*" John i. 7. Accordingly, in an express manner, he pointed out the Messiah when he came into his view. 29th verse, and on. "The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man, which is preferred before me; for he is before me, and I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, *therefore am I come, baptizing with water.*" John then, had a designation entirely different from any other character that has ever appeared, or ever will appear. And his baptism was entirely distinguishable from all preceding, and all following baptisms. To be sure it had a similar moral meaning with all other baptisms enjoined by God, whether before Christ, or after him. For they are all symbolical of internal purity; a cleansing from sin. So far, if you will, John's baptism was Christian baptism. But so far, it was Jewish, or Mosaic baptism also, or a baptism according to the law. For the baptisms under the law were symbolical of inward spiritual cleansing, no less than those under the Gospel. Still John's baptism had a peculiar character. It was different from all other baptisms, essentially so. It was not an appointed seal of God's gracious covenant. Those to whom it was administered, were already subjects of this seal. They carried it in their flesh. It was not the baptism instituted by Christ, to be administered to converts from the Gentile world. This was to be, "into (eis) the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost." Into this name, baptism could not yet be administered.—For the Son was not yet manifested, and exalted to his kingdom. He had not yet been manifested to be the

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end to answer, truth is a secondary object.

Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead. And the Holy Ghost was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified. Christian baptism is not a preparation, for the appearance of the Messiah; but looks back to him as already come. Christian baptism is administered, as expressive, that Jesus is glorified, and that the Spirit is given. The disciples of John were not as such, the disciples of Christ. Many of the former, no doubt, became the latter. But they are often spoken of as distinct and separate bodies.

John's baptism therefore, let the mode of it have been what it would, was appropriate to him. It was limited to his ministry, and terminated with the close of it. This is so plain a case, that perhaps to add any farther proof, would be entirely superfluous. But I am constrained to take notice of one other, and that the rather, because it is so often perverted and abused.—This is found in the beginning of the 19th chapter of the Acts. I will quote the passage at large. "And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain *disciples*, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then, said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him, which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." These twelve persons, called disciples, though now resident at Corinth, were probably Jews. Their having received John's baptism, seems to prove that they were. For his ministry was addressed to the Jews only, and confined to the wilderness of Judea. They were disciples, as they belong-

ed to the kingdom of God generally, i. e. without respect to an immediate discipleship to Christ. They were those who had been waiting for redemption in Israel. Perhaps they had some knowledge, and belief in the dispensation, of the Gospel, and in Christ, as the Messiah. Be this however as it may; they were subjects of John's baptism only. They were unacquainted even with the name of the Holy Ghost; the gift of which attended the baptism into Christ, in distinction from the baptism of John. They were now baptized by Paul, in the name of the Lord Jesus; in consequence of which, they received the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous influences. Here then, was a complete rebaptization; or else, the baptism of John, and Christian baptism were materially different. A rebaptization will not be pretended. Therefore John's baptism was of a peculiar nature, and confined to him. To evade this, it is alledged, that Paul did not here baptize these persons; but that the 5th verse, "And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," is merely a continuance of Paul's testimony respecting John; i. e. Paul says, when the people heard what John said, that they should believe in Christ, then they were baptized by John in the name of the Lord Jesus. But this is wresting the passage at a shocking rate. It is departing from the plain and obvious meaning of it, and adopting one which invention only can supply. John did indeed preach such doctrine. But there is no evidence that he baptized into the name of Christ. Evidence is altogether the other way. He could not, with propriety do it. For Jesus was not yet manifested. John's baptism was the baptism of repentance, which looked forward to Christ as to come. The baptism into the name of Christ, was a baptism into him as actually come. Besides, the Holy Ghost was given generally, not in consequence of confirmation by the imposition of hands, as a thing quite removed from baptism; but in immediate connexion with baptism itself.*

* It is true, that a few Pœdobaptists have adopted this construction; but the reason is obvious. When men have an end to answer, truth is a secondary object.

In connexion with this account of John's baptism, let us spend a few thoughts upon the particular baptism which was administered by John to the Messiah.

We can have no difficulty in concluding that the baptism administered to Christ, could not have been precisely for the same reason, nor have imported the same thing in all respects, with the other baptisms of John. For it could not have been a symbol of his being cleansed from sin, and becoming spiritually prepared to receive the Messiah, as king of Zion; he himself being that person, and antecedently holy.

Neither could it have been a seal of the covenant. That he had already received in his infancy. Nor could it have been an initiation into the Levitical priesthood. He was not made priest of the Aaronic order. "For," Heb. vii. 14, 15; 16. "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe, Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made, *not after the law of a carnal commandment*; but after the power of an endless life." Christ was indeed priest, as well as prophet, and king. These three characters were combined in him, as they were in Melchisedec, his principal type. But his priesthood had no connexion with that which was ordained by the Sinai law. To have assumed this sort of priesthood therefore, instead of being a fulfilment of righteousness, would have been a violation of rule.

What then was the import of this baptism?

It is to be remembered, that the three offices of *prophet*, *priest*, and *king*, in the Messiah, were *inseparable*. His manifestation to Israel, was therefore a manifestation of him, in all these respects. His baptism, which connected with it John's testimony; the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the form of a dove; and the voice from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," was this manifestation. His baptism was eminently distinguished from John's other baptisms, by these miraculous events, which were

a concurrent and decisive testimonial, that Jesus was the true Messiah. This seems to be confirmed by all the circumstances which preceded. Let us briefly run over them. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan (a considerable distance) *to John*, to be baptized of him." He came to John, because he was expressly designated, to manifest him to Israel, as the true Messiah. No other reason for his coming to John, can be assigned. John had been told, John i. 33. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." He had not been told to baptize Jesus. When Jesus therefore requested baptism of him, he refused. What reason does he give? "I have need to be baptized of thee; and comest thou to me?" *I am the servant. You are the master. I have need to be your disciple. It is unseemly for me to number you with mine.* Jesus replied, "*Suffer* it to be so now." I am indeed your Lord and Master, the Messiah; and you might well hesitate, if I proposed myself for baptism, upon the principle of being a sinner. But there is another reason why I should be baptized. This is requisite as a regular manifestation of me, in my official character. The reason is then given, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouness." John's hesitancy was because he knew him to be the Messiah. And Christ's request to be baptized was on that very ground, that he was the Messiah. John was convinced by the reason assigned, that it was a part of his official duty, by this symbol, as well as by a direct testimony, to manifest him; and that it was incumbent on Jesus to be *thus* manifested. Here was *right*, with respect to both. This right, i. e. the propriety of John's baptizing Jesus, and of Jesus' being baptized, must be the *righteousness* intended by Jesus, in the reason assigned.

Righteousness supposes a law. What law was it which required this baptism? I answer, *typical usage*. This typical usage originated in the requirement that the priests of the Aaronic order, who, as is to be col-

lected from Numbers iv. 3, assumed their office at 30 years of age, should be washed with water, as a symbol of their investiture with this office, and of their being true priests of the law. Symbols of this kind, plainly grounded upon this law, had ever been in use, in investing men, with the priestly, prophetic, and regal offices. And as these offices were all united and consummated in Christ, as Messiah, it became necessary, (το πρεπον), it was *comely, suitable, regular*; that a corresponding symbol should attend his public induction into his Messiahship. Thus he became in all things like unto his brethren, a partaker even in their symbolical investitures. Thus also it appeared, that he took not this honor upon himself, the honor of a priesthood, after the order of Melchisedec, rashly, and in a disorderly way, as an impostor, but was called of God, as was Aaron.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Respecting the Lord's Day, the Lord's Supper, and Christian baptism. In this chapter it is attempted to shew, that these ordinances are to be observed by Christian believers, as seals of the same covenant, of which the Jewish Sabbath, the Passover, and Circumcision, were seals.*

THAT what is called the Christian Church is the continuity of Israel, as an indissolvable society; and that this society, from its commencement to its completion, is founded upon the covenant of circumcision, as its constitutional basis, has been evinced. That the Sinai covenant was essentially distinct from this covenant, and *added*, as a temporary institution, and for temporary purposes, has also been proved. That this covenant, so far as it was of a peculiar character, as a shadow of good things to come, was to wax old, and vanish away, at the appearing of Christ; and did, in fact, become entirely obsolete, by the accomplishment of its typical design in his death, is made evident, by several passages which have been already introduced into this work, and is not controverted by any denomination of Christians. We are therefore to consider that covenant, viewed as a separate and distinct institution, as though it never had been. I say, *as a distinct institution.* For there were some precepts wrought into it, which were not peculiar to it; which are essential to every institution of God, and of eternal obligation. These precepts are not improperly called *moral;* in distinction from *positive.* Such, for example, is the precept, which requires us, to love the Lord our God with all our heart; and our neighbour as ourselves. Such is the precept, which requires justice

in all our dealings. These precepts are not appropriate to the Sinai covenant. They extend to all beings; to all dispensations; to all times; and can never cease to be obligatory. These precepts were not properly *added*. They were previously in force.

We are then to consider the Church of God, after the resurrection of Christ, as holding the same moral position, that it held, anterior to the Sinai covenant. Now, to the Church, in this state, there were appended three ordinances;* the *sabbath*, the *passover*, *and circumcision*. We will begin with the sabbath.

It is a matter of debate among divines, whether the Sabbath was observed during the period which preceded the exodus. Those who wish to examine this subject minutely, will find assistance, in President Edwards's Discourses, upon the Change, and Perpetuity of the Sabbath; in that part of Dr. Paley's Moral Philosophy, which treats upon this subject; and in Witsius, and Baxter. The limits we have prescribed to ourselves will not admit of this investigation. Perhaps the observations which will be introduced, will convince the reader, that, as the Church did certainly exist, there is great reason to presume it never was without the enjoyment of the Sabbath; that it is as old as creation; or, at least, as the introduction of the new covenant; and that the observation of it cannot cease to be obligatory so long as the world endures.

It is a certain fact, that the Sabbath was appointed to Israel before the introduction of the Sinai covenant. See Exodus, xvi. 23. "And he said unto them. This is that which the Lord hath said. Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath, unto the Lord." In the foregoing verse it is said "And it came to pass, that on the *sixth day*, they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man." How came this pre-

* Some perhaps will be offended that the term ordinance should be applied to the sabbath; as we have been accustomed to speak of the ordinances of the Christian Church as two only, baptism and the Lord's supper. They will allow it to be an institution. But the words are so nearly synonymous, that the author hopes he shall be indulged the liberty he takes, in applying the term ordinance, to the sabbath also.

ceding day to be counted the *sixth* day; unless the practice of counting by weeks had been in use? And how came the congregation, of their own accord, to gather twice as much on the sixth day, that they had gathered on any preceding day, but in respect to the sabbath of rest, which they knew was to follow? And how did they so generally know this, unless they had been in the habit of observing it? These circumstances do not look altogether like an original appointment; but as the recognition of an institution; which, though it had gone into some neglect, under the bondage of Egypt, was of primitive standing.

At any rate, the sabbath was here established. It was established anterior to the introduction of the Sinai covenant. Hence, in distinction from all the ritual precepts of that covenant, it was incorporated into the decalogue. This institution therefore did not expire with that covenant. It still continues, and is of permanent obligation even to the end of the world, unless there be a particular revocation of it.

This idea of the permanency of the sabbath will be confirmed, by considering its *design*, *its use*, and the *character* which the scriptures give to it. These things however we must run over with as much brevity as possible.

The design of the Sabbath is, that it should be a day of *holy rest*, to return at regular periods, for the refreshment of man, and the irrational animals under his care, and subject to his use; and that opportunity might be had for those spiritual employments, in which the glory, and felicity, and beauty of the Church consist and appear. Rest is the proper meaning of the term *sabbath*. And that rest is the thing in which it appropriately consists, is agreeable to the account given of it in every place in which it is mentioned. The people were to *rest* from gathering manna. *Rest* is mentioned in the fourth commandment as the thing in which the sabbath is to be sanctified. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," *to sanctify it*. How? The commandment proceeds to explain. "Six days

shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt *not do any work*, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For, in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth; the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord thy God, blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Rest, in such regular returns, securing refreshment to man and beast, and giving opportunity for the pleasing and edifying employments of public, and private devotion, is, to the people of God, an inestimable *favor*. Accordingly the sabbath is spoken of as *given*, in testimony of paternal love, by God, to his Church. Ezek. xx. 12. "Moreover also I *gave* them my Sabbaths." The Sabbath, as a rest, is a relief from the curse which followed the apostacy; and grateful, in this view, to the benevolent man, not only with respect to himself, and his brethren, but the brutes, who seem in some measure to partake of the curse.

Besides being a day of rest, the sabbath was *commemorative of the great work of creation*; which, in the divine plan, was subordinate to the greater work of redemption. It was commemorative of the work of redemption itself, of which the Church is the subject. Hence the deliverance from Egypt, as an important part of this work, is particularly mentioned, as a reason why the Church was required to keep the sabbath. Deut. v. 14. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt; and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; *therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee, to keep the sabbath day.*" This was a reason of the injunction, as appropriate to the Church, in distinction from the heathen world.

The sabbath is also a *type of heaven*; and as such, presents an assurance to the believer of a speedy close of all the labors, and sorrows of the present world.

In the 31st chapter of Exodus, the sabbath is spoken of in another view; as *a sign* of God's gracious

relation to Israel, as their sanctifier, and the observance of it, on that account, is enjoined, not as a temporary institution, but as a *perpetual covenant.* "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, Verily, my sabbath ye shall keep, *for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations, that ye may know, that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.* Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall be surely put to death; for whosoever doth any work thereon, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Wherefore, the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a *perpetual covenant.* It is a *sign* between me and the children of Israel *forever.*" Here the sabbath is placed on an exact parallel with circumcision, as a *sign.* It is another public standing token of the gracious covenant which God established with Israel. It is hence, by a metonymy, called *the covenant*, as circumcision is. On all these accounts, it is an endowment of infinite value. It cannot be too highly appreciated. The moral language of it, is that of holy affinity; of covenant love. It testifies, in the most impressive and endearing manner, the blessed, and indissoluble union which subsists between God and his people. Hence it is spoken of, Isaiah lviii. 13, as claiming to be reputed, and treated, "a *delight, the holy of the Lord*, and *honorable.*" The Church cannot then be divested of the sabbath. It is an irrevocable grant. "The gifts and callings of God are *without repentance.*" His judgments he may withdraw; but his absolute, gracious bequests, he can never annul.

Let us now see what evidences there are in the New Testament, of the actual continuance of the sabbath, in the Gospel day. We are to remember, that the enquiry is as much, whether the sabbath be withdrawn as a *blessing*, as whether it hath ceased to be obligatory as a *duty.*

1. If the sabbath be revoked in the New Testament, the revocation is expressed, and can be found. But a revocation of it cannot be found. The sabbath therefore remains.

The *change* of the sabbath, in regard to the day in which it is observed, and which, more generally in the Christian Church, out of respect to Christ, and as commemorative of his resurrection, is called the *Lord's day;* allowing it to have taken place, as it is almost universally conceded that it has, under the authority of God, is not a revocation of it. The phrase *change of the sabbath*, supposes that the sabbath itself is continued. For to *change* and *annul* an institution, are different things. For a distinct elucidation of this matter, the reader is referred to President Edward's Discourses, above mentioned, on the change and perpetuity of the sabbath. Let it be only observed here, that the stress of the law respecting the sabbath, lies upon the *nature of the day*, as a day of *holy rest*, a *sign of the covenant*, a *gift*, a *blessing*, a *type* of heaven, *a memorial*, and upon its returning periodically after six days of labor. Whether it shall be this day or the other, is not indeed left to our discretion; but still, is a *circumstance*, a mere *modal* affair. This change therefore does not, cannot alter, or affect the thing itself. Suppose God had instituted a fast day, to be observed on that day which we now call Tuesday; and had afterwards ordered, that it should he observed on Wednesdays; this alteration, being circumstantial, it is evident, would not determine that it is no longer the fast day, which God originally appointed. The change, in this case, would certainly prove the opposite; that the fast day is continued. For it must be understood to continue, in order to be a subject of this new modification.

2. If Israel, as an indissolvable society, is the olive tree, introduced by Paul, in the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans; and if the broken off branches are to be graffed into it again, certainly the unbelieving Jews, when the vail shall be taken from their heart,

and they shall turn unto the Lord, will be restored to the enjoyment of their sabbath. For they will partake with the adopted Gentiles, of the *root* and *fatness* of the olive tree. To this period, the prophet Isaiah at the close of his prophecy, has evident respect; and his words, therefore prove, that the restored Jews, with the Gentiles, will enjoy their sabbath. "For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord; so shall your seed, and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one *sabbath to another*, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

3. The declaration of Christ, Matthew xii. 8. "For the son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath day," clearly implies, that the sabbath belongs perpetually to the kingdom, of which he is the visible head. The declaration which precedes this, in Mark ii. 27, is also corroborative of the same thing. "The sabbath was made for man." *It is a blessing of the covenant of which Christ is the mediator, and designed altogether for the benefit of those who are the subjects of that covenant.* It is then as certainly perpetual, as the covenant itself is perpetual.

4. The actual continuance of the sabbath under the Gospel dispensation, and after the Sinai covenant was abolished, is evident, from Mat. xxiv. 20. This passage it will be remembered, respected an event which took place about forty years after Christ's ascension. "And pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the *sabbath day*." If Christ had foreknown that the seasons were to be immediately discontinued, the direction to his hearers, to pray that their flight might not be in the *winter*, would have been impertinent; and would, as he must have known, have exposed him to the imputation of having given a direction altogether futile, and even ridiculous. If he had foreknown that the *sabbath* was to be discontinued; and he must have foreknown it, if it were to be the case; for he was Lord of the sabbath day; his direc-

tion respecting the sabbath, would have been equally impertinent, and have exposed him to the same imputation.

5. As a farther confirmation of the actual perpetuation of the sabbath, in the Gospel day, and after the accession of the Gentiles, we may notice the words of Paul, I. Corinthians xvi. 2. "Upon the first day of the week (Κατα μιαν σαββατων, literally, upon *one of the sabbaths*) let every one of you &c."

If the present translation be correct, still the use of the word σαββατων will imply the continuance of the sabbath. How can weeks be continued at all, scripturally and religiously, but upon the principle of the continuance of the sabbath? Notices of the continuance of the sabbath, and of the observance of it by the Apostles, are to be found repeatedly in the book of Acts: but it is not thought necessary to give them a particular attention.

The indispensable necessity of the day for the furtherance of religion, the conversion of sinners, and their edification when converted, for the manifestation of Christ, and the accomplishment of God's purposes relative to Zion, is a cogent argument of its continuance. If the sabbath was necessary to present the Church to the view of the world, as an army with banners, under the former dispensation, it is no less necessary for this purpose under the latter.

Two passages are brought forward by those who oppose this doctrine, as favoring, if not proving the discontinuance of the sabbath. The first is in Rom. xiv. 5. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Here the Apostle is supposed to admit, that the distinction between the sabbath and other days, was obsolete; therefore that the sabbath was no longer a matter of obligation, but of opinion. The sabbath, it is to be here recollected, was not imposed as a burden, from which the Church was to be relieved; but given, as a *blessing*, which it was to enjoy. It is to be remembered also, that the Chris-

tians at Rome consisted partly of native Jews, and partly of Gentiles. The believing Jews retained strong prejudices in favor of all the observances of their ancient religion. The Gentiles, on the other hand, had prejudices against them. It could hardly be otherways the ', than that there should be disagreements among these christians, about several things belonging to the Jewish law. To these disagreements the apostle has respect in this chapter. He begins thus. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to *doubtful disputations.*" Here are the things he is going to treat of as things of doubtful disputation; things, which he himself could not, or did not think it prudent then, expressly to settle. The sabbath, so repeatedly and solemnly enjoined, and with such a highly important design, could hardly have come under this description. He speaks of days supposed to be consecrated. But these days stand in connexion with eating, or not eating particular kinds of food; which circumstance does not at all apply to the sabbath.— These days therefore, ought to be understood as fast, or festival days; and several such days were ordained in, and were peculiar to the Sinai law. "For one believeth that he may eat all things. Another, who is weak, eateth herbs." The discourse upon clean, and unclean things, eating, and not eating, runs through the chapter. When therefore, he says, as in the 5th verse, "One man esteemeth, &c." he ought, in fairness, to be understood as speaking of these days. At any rate, here is nothing express respecting the sabbath. And if there were, there is certainly nothing which amounts to a revocation of it. The most that the passage teaches, even upon the supposition that the apostle alludes to the sabbath, in connexion with other consecrated days, is, that each one should labor to possess the truth; and that forbearance should be exercised in case of disagreement, if that disagreement do not appear to result from a contumacious spirit.

Had the sabbath, with all other consecrated days, been openly and formally set aside, such a controversy

as that which is brought into view in this chapter, could hardly have subsisted. The cause of it seems to have been, that which is at the foundation of many disputes and divisions at the present day; the not distinguishing carefully between anterior institutions and laws; and those which were *added*, as peculiar to the covenant of Sinai, which only have waxed old, and vanished away. The observance of the sabbath was continued under the authority of Christ, and his apostles. The usages which were sanctioned by the Sinai covenant, did not actually cease *at once*, with the removal of that covenant. They were abolished *gradually*, as the weak believers among the Jews could bear. Hence it was natural enough for those Jews to contend, that if the sabbath was to be observed, the other consecrated days ought to be observed likewise. This dispute the apostle manages, with the same spirit of accommodation, with which he circumcised Timothy, kept the feast at Jerusalem, and conformed, on occasions, to several things in the ritual law.

The other passage brought forward as an objection, is in Colos. ii. 16, 17. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the *sabbaths*." What sabbaths were these? The term sabbath was first applied to the seventh day. Afterwards it was applied as descriptive of all the consecrated days of the Sinai covenant. See Leviticus xxiii. 32, and 38. As the plural therefore is used, there seems to be reason to presume, that, as in the former case, the apostle had respect to these days of the Sinai law. The 4th verse, if attended to, will convince us that he had. "Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." What was this hand writing of ordinances? It was what he calls, in his letter to the Ephesians, "the middle wall of partition." It was the ritual of the Sinai covenant. But it has been proved that the primitive sabbath did not belong to this covenant. The passage therefore, cannot prove the discontinuance of the sabbath.

The fact of the change of the sabbath from the seventh, to the first day, as having taken place under the authority of God, is admitted by the whole Christian Church, a few individuals excepted. The universal, undisputed practice of the Church in the earliest and purest times of it, and as ordered by the Apostles themselves, is conclusive evidence, both of the perpetuity of the sabbath, and of this circumstantial change respecting it. "All Christians" says Dr. Mosheim, "were unanimous in setting apart the first day of the week, on which the triumphant Savior arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious custom, which was derived from the example of the Church of Jerusalem, was founded upon the express appointment of the Apostles, who consecrated that day to the same sacred purpose, and was observed universally throughout all the Christian Churches, as appears from the united testimonies of the most credible writers."

This change was evidently necessary, to mark the accomplishment of the typical system, respecting Christ; as a public standing testimony, that he was come, and was risen from the dead; that the promises were accomplished in the purification of Israel and the accession of the Gentiles; and that these were the last times; especially, and signally, the accepted times, and the day of salvation.

As the sabbath, and not the less evidently on account of this modification, is perpetuated, in the essential nature of it, as a holy rest, an ordinance forever, a sign of the covenant, a public standing token that God is in the midst of the Church, to sanctify it, a pledge of his love, commemorative of the accomplishment of the great work of our redemption, and a type of heaven, it ought to be received, and observed conscientiously by all Christians, as a most precious blessing of the covenant. All labor ought to be suspended during the complete day, according to the original requirement. No work ought to be done upon it, but such as is of absolute necessity, and the dictate of mercy. The day

ought to be spent in those devotional employments, public and private, which, instead of being a labor and burden to the children of God, are their refreshment, strength, and joy.

Those who trample upon the sabbath are to be understood as trampling upon all that it exhibits; upon the covenant of God; upon its provisions and promises; upon the whole work of redemption; upon the interests of virtue; and as despising the pleasant land.

The *passover* is another ordinance which was appointed to Israel prior to the introduction of the Sinai covenant. It was instituted before their departure from Egypt, and as a standing memorial of their deliverance from the destruction, which cut down all the first born of Egypt. See the 12th ch. of Exodus. The reason given for its institution, is in these words: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and I will smite all the first born of the land of Egypt, both man and beast, against all the Gods of Egypt will I execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you a token, upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Then it is added, "And this shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord, throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast, by an ordinance forever." This exemption of the first born of Israel was an expression of special covenant favor, and stood in close connexion with their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, which was another signal expression of the same thing. Both the events are blended in the design of the institution.

The blood of the lamb sacrificed at the passover, sprinkled upon the door posts of the houses of Israel, was typical of the blood of Christ; through the expiatory efficacy of which, the elect are saved. For it is said, I Cor. v. 7. "For even Christ *our passover* is sacrificed for us." And in I Peter i. 18, 19. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with

corruptible things; as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the *precious blood* of Christ, as of *a lamb without blemish*, and without spot." The passover was then, not only *retrospective*, as commemorative of the great events which took place in favor of Israel, when they were brought out of the house of bondage; but *prospective*, as it prefigured a far greater deliverance to be wrought for the whole Church in the personal sacrifice, resurrection, and conquests, of Christ her king. The expressions respecting the perpetuity of this ordinance, are the same, with those which are used, respecting the sabbath; and if they are to be taken in the same sense, then it is to be understood, that in the substance, in the spirit, and true import of it, it is perpetuated in another form, that of the Lord's supper. So that the supper may not be improperly styled the Christian passover. The deliverance, which the Savior wrought in his death, and resurrection, was so much superior, the consummation of that, which was initial and emblematical, that it seemed to be necessary; at least divine wisdom saw it proper, that this ordinance, as to the form of it, should be changed for one simply retrospective.

That the design of the passover, in a typical view, was answered in the death of Christ, is evident from his own words, Luke xxii. 15, 16. "And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." The passover, was then to be *fulfilled*, in the kingdom of God. The Apostle's calling Christ *our passover*; and the scripture account, generally, of the design of his sufferings, and the efficacy of his blood, determine, that it was fulfilled in his death. By his death he wrought the deliverance of his whole Church, and triumphed over all his enemies. Col. ii. 15. "And having spoiled principalities, and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." It became then entirely improper that the Passover,

in the original form of it, should be continued. To have preserved the type, would have implied that the antitype was not come. It would have been a negative upon the whole gospel testimony. And it is an incontestible fact, which nobody disputes, the universal practice of the primitive church concurring to prove it, that the passover, in its original form, was abolished. Still the essence, the commemorative language of it, was preserved and transmitted, and will be continued to the end of the world, in the supper. This was instituted immediately after the Saviour made the declaration above quoted. The supper, like the passover, is a memorial, and is a matter of law: "Do this in remembrance of me." It commemorates and manifests the same almighty deliverer, whom the passover commemorated; and virtually, that first great deliverance, and not that only, but all the great deliverances he has wrought; his great salvation in the whole extent of it. It manifests the same covenant, and is a far clearer, and more affecting exhibition, of the blessings it contains. For our Lord says, Luke xxii. 20. "This cup is the *new testament* in my blood." i. e. a public token of the New Testament, as the passover was. In the participation of it Christians eat of the flesh, and drink of the blood of Christ, as the true paschal lamb.

Circumcision was another standing ordinance appointed to Israel, before the Sinai covenant was published. In proof of this, enough has been said already. That it was continued to the coming of Christ nobody disputes. We have therefore, but two questions before us here; first, whether circumcision, as outward in the flesh, was abolished; and secondly, whether the essence, or symbolic language of it, as a token of the covenant, is perpetuated in baptism, as its substitute. Circumcision is declared expressly to be a token of the covenant. It is a distinct token from the other two. If it was abolished; if baptism was instituted upon the abolition of it; and is the third token of the covenant, distinct from the Lord's day, and the supper; to be administered, like that, once only,

and at a particular time, i. e. soon upon the visible initiation of the subject into the covenant; and is expressive precisely of the same things; why then, the token is continued, though the form of it is changed. In other words, baptism is circumcision, in the moral import of it, continued.

That circumcision was abolished at the introduction of the Gospel dispensation, is evident, from the fact, that the believing Jews gradually passed into the disuse of it; from the necessity of its discontinuance, as it held forth a typical language, which was fulfilled in Christ's death; and as it was a thing calculated to keep up an undesirable distinction between believers of the circumcision, and believers of the uncircumcision, which, for the more perfect union of the Church, was to be done away; from the undisputed practice of the whole of the primitive Church; and especially, from the decree of the mother Church in Jerusalem, which was ordained under the presidency of the apostles; and, as is expressly said, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Certain brethren went down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and taught the new Gentile converts, in that city, that they must be circumcised, or they could not be saved. This immediately originated the question, Is circumcision obligatory upon the Gentile converts? A solemn mission was sent to the Church in Jerusalem, to ascertain this matter. The Church assembled, deliberated, and finally resulted in this manner. Acts xv. 24, and on. "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with *one accord*, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas, and Paul; men that have hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore, Judas, and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good *to the Holy Ghost*, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these neces-

sary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well; fare ye well." When the epistle was read publicly to the multitude at Antioch, they rejoiced for the consolation. Thus circumcision was formally and publicly abolished, with respect to the Gentiles. But it had been before Christ *obligatory*, with respect to the Gentiles. This then amounted to an implicit abolition of it altogether; though for reasons abovementioned, the believing Jews continued for sometime in the practice of it. They probably did till the distinction between Jew and Gentile was lost, in the christian Church.

The other question is, whether the essence, or spiritual meaning of circumcision, as a token or seal of the covenant, was perpetuated in baptism. Baptism had been before in extensive use; but confined to the Jews, and therefore of an appropriate meaning, not a sign of initiation into the covenant. John's baptism was the baptism of *repentance*, or preparation for the coming of the Messiah. The baptism which the disciples of Jesus administered, was the baptism of *discipleship*. John iv. 1. "When therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus *made* and *baptized* more disciples than John." This baptism was administered to those who had already the token of the covenant upon them; who were previously of the visible seed; and therefore signified merely their separation from their unbelieving and disobedient brethren, to a visible submission to Christ as the Messiah.

We now speak of that baptism which is properly denominated Christian baptism; of baptism as a formally instituted ordinance of Christ, to be administered to all who should be gathered in from the Gentile world. This baptism is entirely distinguishable from all previous baptisms. It was instituted by Christ after his resurrection; was wrought into the grand commission he gave to his disciples to preach the Gos-

pel *to every creature*; was to go side by side with the recovering influence of their preaching; and to be, "into the name (εἰς ονομα) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Matthew xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The question now is, whether circumcision, in the spirit and meaning of it, as a token of the covenant, or seal of the righteousness of faith, be perpetuated, in this instituted baptism. We have seen, that the covenant is *one*, and *everlasting*; and that all the promises of it are irreovocable and effectual, being yea and amen in Christ. Christ is declared to be the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. The covenant, is in fact carried into effect by his agency, in the ingathering of the Gentiles. God saw it wise that the public seal, circumcision, should be appended to the covenant, and put upon all the visible subjects of it, during that long period which went before Christ.—What reason can be given why a seal, equivalent with it, should not be appended to it, and applied to all the visible subjects of it, during the whole time it is published to the world, and the promises of it are fulfilling? Is not God's condescension to his people's circumstances and wants, as great as before? Do not his people, under the Gospel day, need confirmations of his grace, as much as those did who lived under the former dispensation? Must not a public symbol of initiation into the covenant, be of as great utility, in the instructions it administers, and the testimony it impressively bears, to unbelievers, under the latter, as under the former dispensation? Is the fatness of the olive tree diminished, since Jesus has been glorified, the Gospel more extensively preached, and the Spirit given in more plentiful effusions? It has pleased God to perpetuate, under new modifications, the other signs of his covenant. And is it to be supposed that this,

which was the most significant of its nature, and which had a distinct design, not expressed by the others, is withdrawn, without leaving any thing of equivalent import in its stead? Let us besides look directly at baptism itself. What is baptism? Is it a mere ceremony? No. It would be impious to call it so.—Has it any spiritual meaning? Most undoubtedly. "He who believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved: But he who believeth not, and (implicitly) is not baptized, shall be damned. Except a man be born *of water*, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Baptism indicates very much indeed; all that circumcision ever indicated. It denotes a spiritual indissoluble union to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is spoken of by one Apostle, as *saving*. I. Peter iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth now *save us*." In this important respect, it has the same character, which is given by Paul to circumcision. Romans ii. 25. "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law."—*profiteth*. How? Certainly unto salvation.

By the passage quoted from St. Peter, we are taught, that baptism is a *figure*. Of what is it a figure, or symbol? It is conceded on all hands, that it is a symbol of internal cleansing from sin; or of rising to newness of life. But this is exactly the same with becoming a recipient of the covenant. And this is the same with becoming a subject of membership in Christ, being united to the true Israel, or graffed into the olive tree. And such certainly the scripture teaches us that it is. Says Peter, Acts x. 47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, *who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?*"—And in the passage of his Epistle, just quoted, "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but *the answer of a good conscience towards God*." And says Paul. "Know ye not that so many of us as are baptized into Jesus Christ, *have put on* Christ?" Here membership in Christ is expressly brought into view as signified by baptism. But Christ is eminently *the seed*,

Those who are in him, are so in fulfilment of the promises made unto the fathers. They are all covenant correlates with him. "*He* who sanctifieth, and *they* who are sanctified are all of *one*." Then baptism is precisely equivalent with circumcision, save that it has not its typical signification. The scriptures exhibit them as parallel. Is circumcision "that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the flesh?" So is baptism, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience towards God." Are christians baptized into Christ, so that they may properly be called *the baptized?* They are also "*the circumcision*, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh." Were proselytes to the covenant, under the former dispensation, circumcised, in token of their proselytism? So proselytes to the covenant under the present dispensation, are to be; and by all denominations, the quakers excepted, are, in fact, baptized in token of the same thing. Were the circumcised deemed clean, in distinction from the uncircumcised world, who were deemed unclean? So christians, who are baptized, are said to be "*washed*." As certain then, as one is a token of the covenant, or a seal of the righteousness of faith; so, though not thus expressly denominated, is the other; and the latter is, to all intents and purposes, a substitute for the former.

The passage, Colossians ii. 12, 13, commonly introduced in support of the truth now advocated, and too much to the purpose to be overseen by an attentive enquirer, must here, as additional evidence, be carefully noticed. "In whom also (speaking to Gentile christians) ye are circumcised, with the circumcision, made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, *by the circumcision of Christ;* buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God." Some Pœdobaptists, and those very learned men, have contended, that, by the circumcision of Christ here, the apostle means water baptism. It cannot perhaps

be demonstrated, that this is, or that it is not the thing intended. On the supposition that it is, then we have here baptism expressly determined to be christian circumcision. On the supposition that it is not, the evidence is scarcely less conclusive. Let it be conceded, that the apostle is here treating of the sanctification of the heart. What will follow? If, by the circumcision of Christ, in the 12th verse, be meant sanctification of heart; then by baptism, in the 12th verse, must certainly be meant the same thing. For this verse is not the assumption of an entirely new subject. It is a continuity of the sentence, which closes at the end of the verse, and therefore respects the same subject. He tells these Colossians, that they had risen with Christ in baptism. Now, if the subject is the same, and if to put off the body of the sins of the flesh, and to rise with Christ though the faith, which is of the operation of God, be the same thing; which it is presumed no body will dispute; then circumcision and baptism are used as of exactly equivalent import. Then who can doubt that the one is in the place of the other?

It has been sometimes objected to this idea, that if this were the case, the church in Jerusalem might have given a ready reply to the Antiochian christians. They might have told them at once, that baptism was substituted for circumcision, and therefore circumcision was no longer obligatory. To this I reply, that such was precisely the answer that the Jerusalem Church sent back, though not in so many words. These christians had been baptized. They are told, that after this was done, circumcision is not necessary. Baptism, under the christian dispensation, is of equivalent import with, and therefore supercedes the necessity of circumcision.

It has been also asked, If baptism be in the place of circumcision, why is it not confined to males, and administered on the eighth day, as circumcision was? This question goes upon the supposition, that, in order that one institution may be a substitute for another, they must be similar in circumstantial things; than

which nothing is more unjust. It is not necessary for us to know all the reasons for the ordinances God institutes, or the modifications to which he subjects them. But in this case, the reason of this circumstantial difference seems plain enough. The seed, to whom the promises were made, who was to be a male, and the holiness of whose descent was signified by circumcision, is come. The design of this appropriation, is therefore answered. Its discontinuance was necessary to coincide with the Gospel dispensation.

The evidence that baptism is in the place of circumcision, will be considerably strengthened, from the proofs which will be produced, of infant membership, and infant baptism. For by these will appear the entire coincidence between the one and the other. To this subject therefore, we will next proceed.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Respecting the membership of infants in the Jewish, and Christian Church; the application of the seals to them; and the manner in which they are to be treated, by the officers, and adult members of the Church.*

Dr. GILL, and several other Baptist writers, have freely conceded the fact, of the membership of infants in the Jewish Church. But they have not been candid enough to carry up this membership to its foundation in the Abrahamic covenant, notwithstanding they can find no posterior law, ordaining such a revolution in the society of Israel. To get rid of this difficulty, which seems altogether insuperable, they set up their own authority against that of the Deity; and, in opposition to demonstrative evidence, convert the garden of God into an aceldema of dry bones.

It is presumed that the analysis which has been given of the Abrahamic covenant has proved, that infant membership was established in that covenant; that it was in fact, the most distinguishing feature of it. This covenant, it has been shewn, constituted a religious and an indissolvable society, which was to be transmitted, allowing for adult proselytism, seminally, from generation to generation to the end of the world.

It is accordingly a fact, that from Abraham to the Exodus, infants were comprehended in the covenant alliance, and went to compose the society of Israel. It is a fact, not to be contested, that this continued to be the case till the Sinai covenant. And it is a fact conceded, which therefore we have no need to spend time to prove, that it continued ever afterwards, to the coming of the Messiah. He himself became a member

of this society by birth. No law of the Sinai covenant, ordaining the membership of infants at all, and especially as a new thing, can be produced. Infants then must have held their membership, not by the Sinai covenant; but by the Abrahamic covenant only. The abolition of the Sinai covenant did not, of course, affect this establishment.

The only question therefore, now before us, on this subject is, Has the institution of infant membership been revoked under the christian dispensation? None, it is evident, could revoke it but God. For he only, who rightfully, and authoritatively establishes a law, is competent to repeal it. And if the revocation have taken place, it must have been as public, and express, as the law.

Now, that there has been no such revocation, and that infant membership is continued, in its full force, under the christian dispensation, may appear from the following considerations.

1. Infant membership cannot be annulled; because to annul it, would be to diminish materially the *blessing*, which the covenant secured. The covenant entailed, not the curse, but the blessing. "*In blessing* I *will bless thee*, and in multiplying I will multiply thee —and thou shalt be a *blessing*——*the blessing* is in the house of the righteous—and all that see them, shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord *hath blessed*." The blessing attached itself to the society perpetually. It was entailed upon the adopted, as fully as upon the natural seed. "I will bless him that blesseth thee." Galatians iii. 8. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be *blessed*." Here was an irrevocable grant of the entire blessing of the covenant to the believing Gentiles. It is therefore added, in the next verse. "So then, they which are of faith *are blessed with faithful Abraham*." And at the 14th verse, "That *the blessing of Abraham*, might come on the Gentiles through Jesus

Christ." Here is the very blessing with which God blessed Abraham, full, and entire, determined by the apostle to have come on the Gentiles. Hence it is said in the two last verses, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ.—And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise.*" The complete inheritance belongs to them, as proper heirs, by virtue of the absolute promise of the covenant. This blessing could neither be withdrawn, nor diminished; for it was given by will. It might be enlarged, at least in its effects. And we have abundant evidence, that at the advent of Christ, and in the Gospel day, it was enlarged. It was not narrowed into a more diminutive stream, but swelled into a broader river. "And I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Infant membership was an important part of the blessing. Its revocation cannot therefore have taken place.

2. Infant membership is not only secured in the covenant, as a part of the blessing; but it is so inseparably connected with the covenant, as to be essential to its existence. If this be withdrawn, the covenant itself is done away. The *seed* is the great object of covenant promise. "I will be a God to thee, and *to thy seed.*" Abraham was but one. The seed were to be innumerable, and were to come on, in succession, by birth. Infant membership must necessarily coexist with the duration, and execution of the covenant. If it were to be annulled, the enquiry would present itself in a moment, Why? Is the covenant at an end? Has God reversed his engagement, that he will be a God to Abraham and his seed? Has God cast away people whom he foreknew? Has he changed his counsels, and forfeited his oath?

3. If infant membership were revoked under the christian dispensation, it must have brought about a great revolution in the Church; and this revolution must have been a matter of public notoriety. It must

have impressed the minds of the adult members of the Church, especially the Jewish believers, very sensibly. It must have been a source of commotion, of objection, at least of solicitous enquiry; and it seems impossible that very much should not be found in the scriptures respecting it. Such a change could hardly have failed to be a subject of prophecy; and of history, after it had taken place. Infant membership had existed about two thousand years; and all the habits of opinion and practice, in Israel, had become conformed to it. Changes of far less moment, and calculated to affect the feelings of individuals, and the economy of the Church, far less sensibly, were subjects of prophecy, and of particular record. If a small Pœdobaptist Church in these days, becomes Antipœdobaptist, or even a majority of them, it is noised all over the country, and becomes a matter of public agitation; of exultation on the one hand, and of regret on the other. But not a lisp of any such thing do we find in the scripture history.

4. If such a revocation has been given out, it is not lost. It is certainly somewhere in the scripture, and can be produced. But the opposers of infant membership have not been able, they have not even attempted to produce such a revocation; though urgently and publicly called upon to do it. And now they are once more challenged to produce such a revocation. A recourse to the miserable pretence, that the Sinai covenant was a political compact, and the Jewish Church a worldly commonwealth, will not be accepted in the room of it.

5. There are several prophecies and promises, in the Old Testament, which looked forward to the Gospel day, and which could not possibly be fulfilled, but upon the principle of the continuity of the membership of infants. Such, for example, is the promise, of making a new covenant with the house of Israel; on which we have so particularly commented in the course of this work. That clause only, will be here quoted, which respects the present point. "And they shall teach no more, every man his neighbor, and every man

his brother, saying, know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the *least* of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." This prophecy had ultimate respect to a period yet future. It embraces the infant part of Israel as subjects of the salvation promised.—But can they be subjects of this salvation, and yet have no covenant connexion with the people of God ?

In the 46th chapter of Isaiah, the 3d and 4th verses, we have this gracious declaration, addressed to Israel, "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me *from the belly*, which are carried from the *womb*. And even to your old age, I am he ; and even to hoar hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and deliver you." This declaration is not merely descriptive of God's providence, which extends to the world as much as to the Church ; but it is covenant language. It expresses God's covenant care over the individuals of Israel, *from their birth* ; and extends to all future, as well as to past time. But this language cannot apply, if infant membership is discontinued.

In the 30th chapter of Jeremiah, at the 18th verse, is the following gracious promise. "Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places ; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry ; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few, I will glorify them, and they shall not be small, *Their children also shall be as aforetime.*" This promise, as is the case with the most of the promises of the Old Testament, had undoubtedly, immediate respect to the return from the Babylonian captivity ; but ultimate respect to a period yet future, when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and so all Israel shall be saved. But how is it possible the promise should be fulfilled, if there be a revocation of infant member-

ship? Such a revocation must place the infant part of Israel, out of the gates of Zion, abroad, in the midst of the uncovenanted world; a condition just the opposite of what they were aforetime.

6. The membership of infants, instead of being annulled, is openly recognized and confirmed, by our Savior. Matth. xix. 13. "Then were there brought unto him, *little children*, (παιδια; in Luke it is, βρεφη, infants) that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for *of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" The Baptist writers are undoubtedly correct, in saying, that these infants were not brought to Christ for baptism. Nothing of this kind appears. Infant baptism was not probably now in use; because infant circumcision was. But, whatever some of this sort of writers may indiscreetly insinuate to the contrary, the best informed, are generally constrained to acknowledge, that infants in years are meant. The circumstance of their being *brought*; of those being rebuked who brought them; and not the children for coming; and their being taken into the Redeemer's arms, decide, that they were infants, literally. Dr. Gale freely concedes this. Reflections, page 431. They could not have been brought, this writer contends, for spiritual blessings; because, being without sin, and not moral agents, they were incapable of such blessings. He says they were brought to have their diseases healed. This he says without one word of evidence. He says it even against evidence. For why should the disciples interpose to prevent the miraculous works of Christ, in healing the diseases of infants, any more than those of adults? The text says, they were brought to have the Savior "*lay his hands on them, and pray.*" For what should he, could he pray in their behalf, but for spiritual blessings? And was he not always heard, so that his prayers were as efficacious as absolute promises, to secure to the subjects of them, the blessings of the covenant? If this be the just construction, and no other

seems at all admissible, then our Savior's order, to have these infants come to him, argreeably to the aim of those who brought them, will imply, that they were capable of receiving spiritual blessings, and of course, of being members of his kingdom. But not to dwell on the reason of their being brought, which is rather circumstantial, the weight of evidence is in the last clause of the passage. "*Of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" This is a positive assertion; and one would think sufficiently clear and unambiguous. It teaches expressly, that of such the kingdom of the Messiah, in the glorious day of the Gospel, does consist. Suppose a magistrate, who was correctly informed, and whose province it was to decide, should say of several infants, and especially upon an occasion of their being brought to receive some civil franchise, *of such is the community;* would any one be in danger of misapprehending his meaning, who had not some interest to secure by the perversion of his words? But the opposers of infant membership, have two evasions, to get rid of the force of this declaration. One is, that by the kingdom of heaven, is meant, the kingdom of glory. So Dr. Gale contends. But this is mere assertion, and contrary to evidence. For the phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, as has been shewn, and as he himself is constrained to concede, generally means the kingdom of the Messiah, in its rise, under the Gospel dispensation. In this sense, it was a good reason why the Savior should allow, these children to come to him for his blessing. For he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, without distinction of age or rank. But suppose the kingdom of glory is intended; it will really amount to the same thing. For that is but the Messiah's kingdom, in its ultimate state of exaltation. And none are admitted there, who have not union to him here. "He who hath Christ, hath life; but he who hath not Christ, hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

It is objected, that this construction makes the Savior say, what it was altogether needless he should

say. For if infant membership did exist; if this was a part of the plan of the Messiah's kingdom, and then in operation, it was perfectly well understood; and therefore need not be declared. But the Messiah was now *ordering and establishing his kingdom forever.* And it might not be known by all, how he was ordering it in this respect. There might be, and probably were many contrary appearances. Those who actually followed Jesus, were generally beyond the period of infancy. This might suggest sufficient reason for Christ to take this opportunity openly to confirm the memberhip of infants in his kingdom. What thousands now confidently believe, might have been then a matter of question.

The other evasion is, that by the terms, *of such,* we are to understand persons who are spiritually formed *after such a model;* i. e. *of such persons as are like these infants in the temper of their minds.* But there is not a word said of these infants, as subjects of real sanctification. And if there were, it does not appear, that they would be any better models of piety than sanctified adults. Neither is it the object of the Savior to exhibit them in that light. The idea is, besides, far fetched, and inapt. It is a bad reason, unworthy of the Savior of the world to assign. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; *for of characters like these little children, the kingdom of heaven is composed.* It is well observed by Dr. Hemmenway, that upon this understanding of the declaration, lambs and doves might have been ordered by the Savior, to be brought to him with as much propriety; and to them the declaration would as pertinently apply. If these children are spoken of merely as children, without respect to their sanctification, the parallel, which is made by this supposition, will not hold, and the reason is as bad as possible. If with respect to a sanctification, of which they really were subjects, the reason is far better, as confined to them; and the original (εκ τοιουτων) favors the confining of it to them. The fact however is, member-

ship only is asserted. And this, it is evident, is exactly the reason which should have been given.

This relation of membership in his kingdom, seems plainly recognized again by Christ, in Mark ix. 36, 37. "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them, and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children, *in my name*, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." In *the name of Christ*, is a mode of speaking, which, as is evident from parallel places, is equivalent with a disciple of Christ, or as belonging to Christ. See Mark ix. 41. "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, *because ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." These children were of a particular description. εν τοιουτων παιδιων, *one of such children as these*. They were children of his kingdom; probably children of parents who adhered to him, as the Messiah. Their relation to him *as his*, is expressly brought into view in the passage. For those who received *them*, received, for that reason *him*. Surely then, infant membership is here recognized and confirmed.

7. The grand commission which Christ gave to his disciples, to go over the world and preach the Gospel in his name, is delivered in such terms, as seem necessarily to imply the continuance of infant membership in his Church, to the end of time. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

We will not here go into the dispute, on which so much learning has been expended, respecting the proper meaning of the Greek term, μαθητευω; and whether the nations were to be made disciples, *in order* to be taught; or were to be acknowledged and baptized, as disciples, subsequent to their being taught, and upon their receiving the Gospel. I am ready to concede, it

is necessary that an adult be taught, in order to his being a disciple; and that he can become such, by consent only. Still, the commission is conclusive proof of the continuance of infant membership.

The following things will make this proof appear.

1. This is the most full and formal commission to the apostles, and their successors, for preaching the Gospel, and extending the Church among the Gentiles, which is to be found in the scripture.

2. The objects of this instruction, or making of disciples to Christ, are the whole family of man, without any respect to inferior distinctions of rank or age. (παντα τα εθνα.) This language comprises the whole family of man; not excepting the infant part of this family. If it should be said that the word *teach*, necessarily limits the commission to persons who have arrived to years of understanding, and therefore excludes infants, as they are incapable of being taught; then most certainly the other rendering, which has very much beside to prove its justness, and which some baptist writers have adopted, must be admitted; i. e. the making *disciples* of all nations; because no such limitation is expressed, or even intimated in the commission.

3. The commission evidently supposes the natural possibility, that the whole family of man should be so effectually taught, or made disciples, as that it should be incumbent to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. To say that this is a natural impossibility, is to say, that the Savior gave out a commission, which was incapable of being executed.

4. That which is naturally possible; and for which a public, solemn commission is given by the Savior, with the encouraging assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," may be supposed to be a reality. Unless divines mistake very much in constructing the prophecies, such a state of things will take place before time is no more. Satan will be driven entirely from his usurped dominion. He

will be bound, and cast down into the bottomless pit, and there holden in chains of darkness, so that he shall be able to deceive the nations no more, for a thousand years. The earth shall become exclusively the inheritance of the saints. All things will be made morally new; so that there will be nothing to hurt or offend. There shall be written even upon the bells of the horses, *holiness to the Lord.* Now then let us suppose,

5. That the Gospel had in fact so run, and been glorified, in the course of a year, or even a century, as that the whole family of man, all nations, had been brought to a saving subjection to the Messiah. None will deny, that in such a case, the infant part of this great family would necessarily be gathered into his kingdom, and numbered with his disciples. Undoubtedly they would be disciples upon a different principle from that of personal consent to the Gospel. It would be connectively with their parents, and by virtue of this unlimited dispensation of grace. If any one will contend that discipleship belongs exclusively to adults, he will certainly place himself in a state of open warfare with this commission, which Christ gave to the apostles. The commission necessarily involves infant discipleship; therefore the continuance of the membership of infants in Christ's kingdom.

6. We have another proof of the continuance of infant membership in the declaration of Peter, Acts ii. 39. "For the promise is unto you, and *to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This passage has been a subject of much altercation, and has been tortured in a most shocking manner. It is [illegible] that the exegesis which has been giv[illegible] of circumcision, and the view[illegible] manner, in which it h[illegible] an easy, and evi[illegible] promise is cer[illegible] to the covena[illegible] designed by [illegible] be what i[illegible]

deniably in the covenant of circumcision. For says Paul, Gal. iii. 16. "He *saith* not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was before confirmed of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul, that it should make *the promise* of none effect." Here we see plainly enough what is meant by *the promise*. It is the coming of the seed, and salvation in him. A correspondent passage we have in Acts, xiii. 32. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that *the promise*, which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, *in that he hath raised up Jesus again*," as it is also written in the 2d Psalm, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." Connect with this the 38 and 39th verses, which are explanatory of what is intended by *the promise*. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man*, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and *by him* all that believe, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." The Messiah, with all the deliverances connected with his appearing, is the summary good of the covenant. This is evidently the thing intended in the prophecy of Joel. All the promises center in Christ. All deliverances are in him. The Jews knew well enough what was meant by *the promise*. They had but one opinion about it. They all understood it respecting the Messiah promised in the covenant with Abraham. Even the expectations of the carnal Jews, with respect to a temporal kingdom, terminated in him. The whole Gospel gives this view of *the promise*.

The evidence which the passage furnishes, of the continuance of infant membership in the Gospel day, will now be easily seen. "The promise (in the covenant established with Abraham, of a Savior, and salvation in him) is *unto you*." *You are the seed of Abraham, in whom that promise terminates:* "And to your children." *They also are the seed whom the promise respects.* "And to all that are afar off, even as ma-

hy as the Lord our God shall call." *The promise of the covenant terminates also, in those elect Gentiles, who are to be gathered in, to make up the one fold of the great Shepherd of Israel.* The declaration assures us, that the promise still had a seminal descent, and terminated upon their children, in the same manner that it did upon them. The reader is here referred to the explanations which have been given, respecting the seed. If then, being a subject of the covenant, constituted membership, here is the continuance of infant membership.

9. Another proof of the continuance of infant membership, and this, particularly among the Gentile believers, is presented in I. Corinthians vii. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, *else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*"— The force of the evidence, and it is certainly demonstrative, lies in the closing declaration; *but now are they holy.* It is to be remembered, that Corinth was a city of Greece; and that the believing adults of the Church, which was collected there, consisted principally of converts from the Gentile inhabitants of that city. To them the apostle is speaking; not to a single individual; but to the whole Church. The children of this whole Church, he expressly pronounces *holy*, in opposition to unclean.* Let the matter of enquiry, and the reason of the declaration be what they may, the declaration itself is conclusive, if the term holy, involve membership. To say that it does not, is to say, that here is a large collection of children, the offspring of believing parents, pronounced, by an inspired apostle, *holy*, who yet have no manner of spiritual relation to the Church of Christ; but are as much of the world

* "If any should say, that though the terms which the apostle uses are indiscriminate, and general, "else were *your* children unclean, but now are *they* holy," he really does not mean to be understood, as speaking of any other children, than such as were born of parents, in the particular condition mentioned in the context: I reply, that if children, who are the offspring of parents, one of whom only is a believer, are holy; those children, who are the offspring of parents, *both believers*, must certainly be holy. And all the children of this Church, and of every Church, must come under one or the other of these predicaments.

as any children of Pagan unbelievers. To support an assertion so opposite to the ordinary import of the term holy, must require some invention. But invention, I apprehend, will be found a feeble auxiliary in this service.

The term holy, as it is used in the scriptures, has but two senses. A thing is holy internally, or externally; in itself, or by some relation. As that which is unclean, must be so, internally or externally; in itself, or by some relation. It is not necessary, that by the term holy, as used in the passage before us, we should understand that which is internal, or that all these children were subjects of real sanctification. Though, if this interpretation were to be adopted, the membership of infants would, it is evident, follow of course. For there can be no debate whether children, who are known and testified, by an infallible authority, to be really sanctified, belong to the Church.

The term holy, as it respects that which is visible, and by relation, has its determinate meaning in the scripture. The people of Israel, in their collective capacity, are repeatedly called holy. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, *an holy nation.*" By this epithet, an idea is conveyed to us of their external character, as visibly separated from the world, and appropriated by covenant institution to God, as his peculiar people. We have mention made of holy ground, the most holy place—most holy offerings—most holy things—of the holy mountain,-and of the holy temple. All consecrated things are termed holy. Visible christians are called holy, in distinction from profane men, who form another sort of society. The sense of the term *holy*, is precisely the same in all these cases. It intends peculiar appropriation to God, as his; and this, as either subject to the covenant, or subservient to it. And what else do we, or can we mean by membership in the Church of Christ? A consecration to God, and to his service, according to the provisions of the covenant of grace, involving a relative union to his people, is the essence of church membership.—

Forms are circumstantial things. Dedication, if it respect a person, amounts to this membership. To unite ourselves to the Church of Christ, is to dedicate ourselves to his service, in that Church; and vice versa. The one is inseparable from the other. If a child is appropriated by God as his, it becomes necessarily a member of his kingdom, by virtue of that appropriation. Nothing less can possibly be signified by it. If it is dedicated by the parent, in an instituted manner, that dedication necessarily involves membership. The meaning of the term holy, as used here, in opposition to unclean, has besides its explanation under divine authority. Acts x. 15. "What God hath *cleansed*, that call not thou common." This direction had respect to the ingathering of the Gentiles into the kingdom of the Messiah. *Clean*, or *holy* then, characterizes those who are brought into this kingdom. But if this be the proper meaning of the term holy, as expressing a visible character or relation, the declaration of the apostle, respecting the children of the Church of Corinth, absolutely concludes in behalf of the extension of infant membership among the believing Gentiles, as well as of the perpetuity of it among the believing Jews.

To evade the force of this evidence, the opposers of infant membership allege, that by the term holy, the apostle means *legitimate*. But this is a term much more equivocal than the other. We have to ask, In what sense legitimate? Legitimate is a relative term, which always has respect to some existing law. According to what law then does the apostle assert these children to be legitimate? Is it a law of God? If it be, then it must be that law, for it can be no other, which obliged the Israelites to confine their matrimonial alliances entirely to themselves. Such a law there was. Marriages formed within these limits were religiously lawful. Marriages formed beyond them, or with the idolatrous nations, were religiously unlawful. The offspring of the former, having a descent in agreement with law, were counted for the seed. The offspring of the

latter, being the product of a prohibited alliance, and of a breach of covenant, were accounted not of the seed; or unclean; and were to be put away, as such, from the midst of the holy people.* If the children of the Church of Corinth, are pronounced by the apostle holy, in respect to this law, why then, it amounts to the same thing exactly, with their being holy in the sense just established; i. e. visibly and relatively holy, or within the Church of Christ. Was this a political law? Was it a law of the civil government under which these christians lived? Did the holy apostle mean to pronounce these children legitimate, in opposition to their being bastards, according to the laws of this government? If so, why did he not cut the matter short, and say what he intended, in the use of a term which could be understood, instead of introducing one appropriate to the church, and to scripture, and never before used under this signification? But this is not the case. The apostle was a minister of Jesus. He had resolved he would know nothing but Christ, and him crucified.—He had nothing to do in settling mere civil questions.

Legitimacy in this sense, did not at all relate to the subject of enquiry. The question referred to the decision of the apostle, respected a christian, and his duty as a follower of Jesus Christ. It would seem from the introductory verse, that there were several questions sent by this Church to Paul, for his solution. What they were, we are not told. It is probable they all related to marriage. The one, which the passage before us particularly respected, it would seem, was this.—Whether a believer ought to repudiate his or her unbelieving correlate? This question is the same as, Whether the continuance of the matrimonial alliance, under such a circumstance, were right, religiously considered? This is a question entirely distinct from the other, whether it were right according to the civil law. Such a question they had no occasion to put; and the apostle was the last person to whom such a question could be pertinently referred. The civil law

* See Ezra x. 3.

had nothing to do with belief or unbelief; and the apostle was no determiner of civil questions. The answer which he returns is such as supposes the enquiry to have respected religious right. He sanctions the continuance of the connexion, though one be an unbeliever. He says it is made religiously right, by the faith of the other. If it were not, if the connexion were criminal, in a religious sense, the issue of it would stand just where the children of the idolatrous world do, in an uncovenanted state. As it is, the children are holy. They are like the offspring of Israel, born to God. For his people cannot be deprived of the blessing, by the unbelief of their connexions. Upon the whole, the evasion is frivolous, and shews the desperate state of the cause it was invented to support.

But our Baptist brethren tell us, our construction is embarrassed with insuperable difficulty, from the application of the term sanctified to the unbelieving parent. They say, if holy, (*ἁγίοι*) involves church membership, as applied to infants, *sanctified*, (*ἡγίασται*) as applied to the unbelieving husband, must signify the same thing with respect to him. If the consequence follow, be it so. There is no evading the premise.—But the consequence is denied. We cannot determine the force of a verb, when applied to a particular object, from the force of an adjective, when applied to a very different object, though derived from the same root. The verb does not characterize. The adjective does. The verb merely expresses an action which passes from the agent to the object. Though in a passive form, it expresses an effect only, which effect may not extend to character. Let it be supposed that by sanctified, is meant dedicated; let it be supposed moreover, that there is an instrumental agency on the part of the believing wife, or a natural tendency in her piety, to make the husband a religious man; a character is not given. Though therefore, it be admitted that an agency is expressed by the verb, corresponding with the character given by the adjective, there is no concluding from the one to the other. The

cases of the parent and the child are altogether different. The parent is in character an unbeliever; the child is not. The covenant embraces one, not the other.

10. It is an undeniable fact, that the believing Jews, who were of the mother church in Jerusalem and Judea, continued to practice circumcision upon their infant seed, during the administration, and under the eye of the apostles, and so long as we have any account of them as a distinct part of the kingdom of the Messiah. Evidence is furnished of this fact, from several sources. But we will rest in one passage; which, of itself, is entirely conclusive. This passage is in Acts xxi. 20, 21; and is as follows. "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest brother, how many thousands there are of the Jews which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses; saying, that *they ought not to circumcise their children*, nor to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee; we have four men which have a vow on them. Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads, that all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself walkest orderely, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles, which believe, we have written, and concluded, that they observe no such thing, only &c. Then Paul took the men the next day, and purifying himself with them, entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

This rumor, which excited such agitation among the multitude of the believing Jews, that Paul had taught the Jews, living in foreign countries, to discontinue the circumcising of their children; and the expedient adopted to soothe their minds, and prove

to them, that it was without any foundation; clearly imply the fact, that the believing Jews continued to circumcise their children as they ever had done. And Paul's readiness to use this expedient, for the reason urged, without saying one word in confirmation of the truth of the report proves, that he did not teach the discontinuance of circumcision; and therefore, that it continued to be practised, among all the believing Jews, not only throughout Judea, but through other countries. If it had always been practised, upon the principle of infant membership, as we have proved, doubtless it continued to be practised upon the same principle still. Had this very important part of church institution been revoked, it would have been the indispensable duty of Paul, and of the other apostles, to preach down infant circumcision; and the believing Jews would certainly have gone into the immediate disuse of it. They would have treated their children as no longer united with them in covenant bonds. The fact then, of the continuance of infant circumcision, till the distinction between Jew and Gentile was quite worn away, concludes strongly, in favor of the transmission of infant membership into the Gospel Church.

11. This last article of proof will be confirmed, and considerable evidence added, to substantiate the truth of the continuance of infant membership, under the christian dispensation, if we consider that the baptism of *households* is repeatedly mentioned, with respect to the Gentiles, but not once with respect to the Jews.—This is a remarkable circumstance, which deserves to be noticed more than it has commonly been. There must have been some reason for it. The opposers of infant baptism tell us, that these households consisted of believers only. They say this without one jot of evidence. But suppose it were true; were there probably no similar cases among the many thousands of Jews, who embraced the Gospel in Judea, and in other countries? It can scarcely be doubted. Whence then this noticeable difference?

There are several intimations in the Acts, and the Epistles, respecting the union of Gentile *households* to the Church. The case of Cornelius is pretty clear. Acts xi. 14. "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou, and all *thy house* shall be saved." But the cases of Lydia, and her household; of the Jailor, and his household; and of Stephanas, and his household, are express.

Respecting this last case, particular remarks claim to be made. Stephanas was a member of the Church of Corinth; the children of which, the apostle pronounces *holy*. With our eye upon the testimony of Paul, that all the children of this church were *holy*, let us attend a moment to the case of the baptism of Stephanas, and his household. It is mentioned in the first chapter of the Epistle; and it is mentioned in a very singular manner. "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I *know not whether* I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." He had said before, "I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any man should say I baptized in mine own name." Many others were baptized; but the apostle left it to be performed by other hands; wishing to avoid the danger of being acknowledged *the Master*. But he corrects himself, and says, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas," and adds, "Besides, I *know not whether* I baptized any other." Here he seems to indulge a momentary pause. He is not certain. He has recourse to his recollection, lest he should mistake. He does not positively affirm. But if baptism were, in *all* other cases, confined to believers, as a personal thing; as Paul was the founder of this church, and well acquainted with its organization, why this hesitation? No cause of doubt could have existed. It is submitted to the reader therefore, whether this mode of speaking does not strongly imply, that, agreeably to the relative character given by the apostle of all the children of the church baptism was applied to them, though administered by other hands. It is wished that this consid-

eration may have its proper weight in the reader's mind, and no more.

To return, without controversy, we have express mention of the baptism of three households, in which it is but reasonable to presume that there were some, so young at least, that they could not be baptized upon the ground of their personal faith. But be this as it may. How comes it to pass, that households, are thus mentioned among the Gentile converts, but no such thing with respect to the Jews? There seems to be but one reason for it. The households of the Jews were circumcised; and those of the Gentiles were not. And this by the way accounts for it, that baptism is not once mentioned with respect to the children of believing Jews.

12. And finally; no inconsiderable degree of evidence of the perpetuity of infant membership, in the Church of Christ, is furnished from the source of history. Historic testimony, drawn from works of mere human composure, and not dictated by the infallible Spirit of truth, is not proper to be produced, as having authority of itself, to bind our faith. But it may be auxiliary. It may serve to strengthen our confidence in the construction we put upon God's word.

The historic evidence for infant membership may be classed under four divisions.

1. The first is, the entire silence of history with respect to the discontinuance of it. We are here to remember that the subject of enquiry is, whether the revocation of infant membership have taken place under the immediate direction of Christ, or his apostles; not whether it have taken place at a subsequent period, and by mere human authority. And we now resort to history, merely as witness to fact. It hath been shown that such a change could not have been made without affecting materially the economy of the Church, and exciting much public notice; and that we must have found records of it in sacred history; or at least evident allusions to it. For the same reason, it is hardly possible it should not have been

brought into view by Ecclesiastical Historians, and Commentators. Tradition is always active. It transmits its laws with a permanent effect, and must have told us something about it. But no such record is to be found. No such tradition is delivered.

2. The second species of historic evidence for infant membership, is the fact of the actual prevalence of this principle, recognized in dogmas, opinions and practices, asserting or implying it almost universally through Christendom, from the first century down to the present period, without the possibility of tracing it to an origin, short of the covenant which God established with Abraham. I say *almost universally*. The antipœdobaptists have dissented from this doctrine. But they have been a very inconsiderable portion of Christendom. They have been a sect. They have been opposed, and condemned by the whole body of the church; both the eastern and the western. Their origin, according to Dr. Mosheim, is hidden in the remote depths of antiquity, and is unascertainable. It will not be denied, that the Greek Church has ever embraced, and acted upon the doctrine of infant membership. This is equally undeniable, with respect to the Latin Church. True, it has been holden in unrighteousness, and turned to awful abuse. And so have the holy supper, the sabbath, and the Gospel.— But who will deny, that the transmission of the supper, the sabbath, and the Gospel, as sacred deposits, by the concurrence of the whole church, through every period of it, is evidence that they are of a divine authority? Corrupters of a divine institution, may be as good witnesses of the authority of that institution, as pious observers of it. To invalidate their testimony, infant membership must be shewn to be itself a corruption. But the corruptions which have been introduced into the church, are capable of being traced to their origin in human authority. This is not true of infant membership. It is therefore no corruption.— The reformation did not reject it as such; but incorporated it into its system of faith, as an important part

of the economy of the church. Proof of this is found in almost all the formulas of faith, on which the churches of Europe are established; in the discipline which they have provided for, and practised upon the children of the church; and the constant admission of them to the communional services of it, I mean, prayer and praise.

Antiquity itself testifies to the prevalence of the doctrine of infant membership. Dr. Wall introduces a quotation from Hermas, who, as he says, wrote his Pastor before St. John wrote his Gospel; which amounts to a clear testimony to the prevalence of this doctrine in the primitive Church. That part of the quotation, which particularly applies to the point in hand, is this. "Lapides, Domine, vero illi qui de profundo in structura aptati sunt, qui sunt? Decem, inquit, qui in fundamentis collocati sunt, primum seculum est; sequentes viginti quinque, secundum seculum est justorum virorum." "But Sir, What are those stones that were taken out of the deep, and fitted into the building? The ten, said he, which are laid in the foundation, are the first age; the next twenty five, are the second age of righteous men." Hermas is here, says the Doctor, relating a vision, importing the building of the Church; which is represented by the building of a Tower, wherein all things are shewed, and explained to him by an angel." One part of the materials of this holy edifice, according to Hermas, is that class which comes under the *first age;* i. e. the age which is below manhood. But this will necessarily comprehend infants. Infants then, in part, according to Hermas, constitute the Church of Christ. Another passage, quoted by this writer from Hermas, which is coincident with, and explanatory of the other, is this. "Omnes enim infantes honorati sunt apud Deum, et primi habentur." *For all infants are in honor with the Lord; and they are esteemed the first of all.* He is here speaking of the church, and has reference to infants in age. Dr. Gale does not deny the correctness of these quotations from Hermas.

Ireneus flourished about 67 years after the apostles. From him Dr. Wall produces the following quotation. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes." *Therefore he passes thraugh every age. He is made an infant to infants, sanctifying infants.* That infants in age are intended in this passage, is undeniable; and whether the word *sanctificans* has respect to internal or external sanctification, it must imply membership in the kingdom.

"It was the custom in those times (about anno 250) to give the new baptized person, whether infant or adult, the *kiss of peace;* or, as it is called by St. Paul, and St. Peter, *the holy kiss;* or the kiss of charity, in token of their owning him for a *christian brother.*" Wall, I. Vol. 85 page.

Dr. Wall translates a passage from St. Cyprian, where he is inveighing against those who, in the heat of persecution, yielded so as to conform to the prevailing idolatrous worship thus; "And that nothing might be wanting to the measure of their wickedness, their little infants also, being led, or brought in their parents' arms, lost that which they had obtained, presently after they were born. Will not they, at the day of judgment say; *We did nothing of this, neither did we, forsaking the meat and cup of our Lord, run of our own accord to the partaking of those defilements. 'Twas the apostacy of others that ruin'd us; we had our parents for our murderers. 'Twas they that renounced for us the Church from being our mother, and God from being our father.*" Here St. Cyprian plainly considers infants as belonging to the Church, as their common mother; and the manner of his speaking obviously implies, that this was a generally received idea, and that the church acted upon that principle.

3. The third species of historic evidence, in favor of the actual continuance of the membership of infants in the christian church, is that which results from the fact, of their being admitted, at a very early period, to communicate at the supper.

This fact is not here introduced, as an example to be followed; but merely as testimony to the doctrine of infant membership. The practice of infant communion is allowed to have been an error. But it is not the worse evidence on that account. Erroneous practice, which is grounded upon a particular principle, will no less certainly conclude in favor of the existence of that principle, than if the practice were correct. The prevailing notion of many of the primitive fathers, that children were regenerated by their baptism; and their administering baptism upon that ground, were undoubtedly errors; but they no less forcibly prove the fact, that infant baptism was practised, than if they were right. That infants were admitted to communicate generally, in the ages very near to the apostolic era, is made evident by the Rev. James Pierce, in an Essay, written at the beginning of the last century, for the purpose of restoring that ancient usage. This author is learned, accurate, and candid. Hallet says thus of him. "The late Rev. Mr. Pierce, has demonstrably proved, that it was the ancient practice to give the Eucharist to children, in an unanswerable essay on this subject. And as no one has, after many years, attempted an answer to him, I may well here take it for granted, that infants, in the primitive church, were admitted to the communion of christians." Dr. Baldwin concedes, "It is evident infant communion commenced nearly, if not exactly at the same time, that infant baptism did." This is to allow that it was practised as early, in the christian church, as we are able to prove from history, without respect to the scripture, that infant baptism was. The manner in which Dr. Baldwin has expressed this concession, insinuates, that infant baptism *began* to be practised at a period, a century or two removed from the apostolic era; and by placing these two practices on a parallel in this respect, he means to have his reader understand, that there is as little divine authority for the one as there is for the other. To this we altogether object. There is a vast disparity in the two cases.

However ingeniously Mr. Pierce has managed the defence of the right of giving the Eucharist to children; in our opinion, he has failed. The scripture will not bear him out in this doctrine. If it would, we should allow the argument from antiquity all its force. It would be corroborative evidence. This is exactly the case with infant baptism. As will be seen in the result of this enquiry, there is clear scriptural proof of the latter. It did not then commence, when giving the Eucharist to children did. The latter was an innovation. Still it is proof of infant membership.—Could the elements of the holy supper be given to children, but upon the principle that they were of the church; that they had the same visible union to the Redeemer which adults had?

In proof of the fact of primitive infant communion, the following extract from Pierce, may be sufficient. Page 21. "And what can be more full and express than St. Austin's testimony in one of his Epistles? *Nullus qui se meminit catholicæ fidei christianum, negat aut dubitat parvulos, non accepta regenerationis gratia in Christum, sine cibo carnis ejus, et sanguinis potu, non habere in se vitam, et per hoc poenæ sempiternæ obnoxios. No one who professes himself a christian of the catholic faith, denies or doubts, that children, without receiving the grace of regeneration in Christ, and without eating his flesh, and drinking his blood* [i. e. *without baptism, and the Lord's supper*] *have not life in them, and therefore are liable to everlasting punishment.* Would Austin, do we think, ever talk after this rate, unless he knew it to have been the practice of the eastern, as well as the western churches, to give the Eucharist to children? He could not do it if he had believed that they practised otherwise. And very remarkable is another passage of St. Austin to our purpose; which Dr. Wall has taken notice of, and thus translated. *The christians of Africa do well call baptism itself one's salvation; and the sacrament of Christ's body, one's life. From whence is this, but, as I suppose, from that ancient, and apostolical tradition, by which the*

*churches of Christ do naturally hold, that without baptism, and partaking of the Lord's table, none can come either to the kingdom of God, or to salvation, and eternal life? For the scripture, as I shewed before, says the same. For what other thing do they hold, that call baptism salvation, than that which is said; He saved us by the washing of regeneration; and that which Peter says; The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us? And what other thing do they hold, that call the sacrament of the Lord's table life, than that which is said, I am the bread of life, &c. And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And except you eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man, you have no life in you? If then, as so many divine testimonies do agree, neither salvation, nor eternal life is to be hoped for without baptism; and the body and blood of our Lord, 'tis in vain promised to infants without them.* This is, without doubt, clear evidence that St. Austin was satisfied that infant communion, was universally received in the catholic church in his time. He would not otherways have said, *The Churches naturally hold it.*"

The reader will agree with Pierce, that these declarations of Austin, decisively prove, that admitting infants to communicate at the Lord's table, was in very general practice in his time, and had been, at least for a considerable period before.

4. The last species of historical evidence for infant membership, is the early and universal practice of associating infant children in other communional services of the church. I mean prayer and praise. Beyond all doubt, prayer and praise are communional services. They are appropriate to the church. Strangers cannot intermeddle with them. The prayer of the wicked is abomination. The prayer of the upright is God's delight. "He who offereth praise glorifieth me." It is true, that in the christian church, in these days, multitudes are admitted to join, and do in fact ostensibly unite in these public communional services, who are not understood to be believers.

This mixture is entirely heterogeneous; and calculated to blind and stupify more and more the unawakened sinner. Pierce has proved that it was far otherways in the primitive church. He says, page 134, "I think in the primitive church, none were allowed to be present at any of their prayers, but such as had a right to partake of the Lord's supper. And indeed the only ordinary stated prayers they seem to have made then in the church, were at the administration of this ordinance. Heathens, catechumens of all sorts, and excommunicated persons, were suffered to be present at the reading of the scriptures, and at the exhortations, sermons, or homilies; but none might remain in the assembly, but the faithful, at their prayers."— And he produces several authorities from the writings of the Fathers. Hallet agrees with Pierce, and confirms his account. Yet it is undeniable that infant children were brought to the assemblies of christians, and associated with adult believers in the prayers and praises, which were publicly performed while they were together. Any supposed incapacity in the infant actually to partake of these services, is no valid objection to this argument. If the public prayers and praises of the church were considered ascommunional exercises, from which the world were avowedly excluded, and yet infants were not excluded from the assemblies of the faithful, when these exercises were performed; but there was care that they should be present, it certainly follows, that in the account of the church, they were members.

## INFANT BAPTISM.

FROM the perpetuity of infant membership, as an important part of the economy of the Church, the transition to infant baptism is natural, and inevitable. As Dr. Gale observes with respect to John, iii. 5. "It was not strange, that after the Fathers of the Church adopted the idea, that this passage embraced infants,

as well as adults; and of course that baptism was an indispensable requisite to their salvation; they should generally go into the practice of infant baptism;" so it would seem very strange, if any one were to deny the propriety and obligation of infant baptism, who had adopted fully the principle of infant membership. They are so obviously and so inseparably connected, that infant baptism seems to have been gone into as a matter of course; and explicit precepts enjoining it, as in the case of female communion, appear to have been omitted, as superfluous. The additional evidence we have of it, comes in therefore by the by. The Jewish believers wanted no farther proof of the propriety of continuing to circumcise their children, than the divinely authorized principle upon which Israel had ever practised, that they were born unto God as an holy seed. And as baptism was appointed to the Gentiles in the room of circumcision, and a seal of the one gracious covenant, upon which the Church was founded, no farther proof seemed to be necessary to warrant the application of baptism to their infant children. Baptism was administered to adults upon their becoming united to Christ, and as a token of their membership in him. And if the infant seed stood in the same relation to him as members of his body, the consequence was inevitable, that it behoved them to be baptized. The law of circumcision, especially as it had been extended by God to proselytes, involved an obligation to baptize them; just as the fourth commandment involves an obligation upon us to keep the Lord's day. The reason of the law remained in all its force; and it could not cease to be obligatory, in the spirit of it, merely because the seal was changed, in kind.*

* To infant baptism, as neceſſarily following upon infant membership, Dr. Gill declares himself ready to submit. "Let it be proved," ſays he, "that infants are or ought to be members of Goſpel Churches, and we shall readily admit them." i. e. to baptism. Answer to Dickinſon, page 89. A full demonstration, of this, it is thought has been given. The reader must judge. But let him beware of being swayed by prejudice against it. This prejudice is extensive. It has had deep possession of the author's mind; owing to the misrepresentations which have been given of this sort of membership, and the abuses to which it has been subjected. If it be God's plan of building up the Church, it is undoubtedly a wise plan, and must not be rejected.

Notwithstanding infant baptism follows so necessarily from infant membership, it is proper to confirm it by other evidence. We shall therefore spend a little time in considering the collateral, and incidental proofs of it, which the Gospel furnishes.

1. Let us notice the evidence contained in the commission given by Christ to his disciples to preach the Gospel over the world. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Math. xxviii, 19, 20. We have already commented upon this passage; and shewn, that it proves the continuance of infant membership in the Christian Church. It has appeared, that the commission is incapable of being executed but upon the supposition of it. Had the preaching of the Gospel been so extensive, and so effectual, as to recover all nations to Christ, and to interest them in his salvation, a multitude of infants would necessarily have been brought into his church. But then they must as necessarily have been baptized. For the direction to baptize, is coextensive with the objects whom the commission respected. "Baptizing *them*," the nations.

Had there been no alteration of the seal, and had the term circumcising been used by Christ, instead of baptizing, there is not probably an individual on earth, who would not conclude, without a moment's hesitation, that circumcision was to be extended to the households of converted Gentiles. The opposite principle would have produced such a manifest difference between the Jewish, and Gentile believers, as would have destroyed the unity of the church.

The law respecting circumcision; the nature of the covenant of which it was a token; the blessing it sealed; the language of God respecting the children of his people, as born to him; and the uniform practice of the Israelitish church, led irresistibly to this conclusion. And can the mere circumstantial difference, in

the nature of the token, be of any force with a candid mind, to weaken this conclusion? At any rate, we see that the commission of Christ, from the very terms of it, necessarily involves infant baptism.

2. The declaration of our Savior, John iii. 5, is of weight to determine that baptism ought to be extended to the infant seed of believers. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man, (τις, any one) be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Here water baptism is placed in connexion with the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and the former is made as essential to an entrance into the kingdom of God as the latter.* It is made as essential to infants as to adults; if they equally need regeneration; and if they are comprehended under the universal term τις. This declaration of Christ, introduced with a double asseveration, is equivalent with that of the apostle Peter, I Peter, iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism *doth now save us.*" It is equivalent also with what God told Abraham, with respect to circumcision. "And the uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off from his people.*" These passages concur in the absolute necessity of our observing the ordinances of God when made known to us. To trample upon any of them is fatal.

As to this passage in John, it is certain, that the primitive fathers very generally understood it as precluding salvation, at least in ordinary cases, without water baptism; and this with respect to infants as well as adults. The letter of the passage certainly concludes in this principle. And the parallel places coincide with it. Let who dare go directly in the face of the Savior's declaration and say, that millions may enter the kingdom of God, who are not born of water.† Dr.

* It is supposed, that in this case, as in the case of circumcision, a neglect, not founded in permission, or involuntary ignorance, but in impiety, is that which excludes from the kingdom of God. An adult may be disinherited of the blessing by this impiety; and he may, according to divine constitution, disinherit his child. It is as great impiety to trample upon an instituted rite, as to live in the commission of any other sin.

† Some persons insinuate, that water baptism is not here intended. Dr Baldwin seems to take this for granted. But upon what grounds I cannot conceive.

Gale denies that this passage has any application to infants. His reason is, that not being subjects of sin, they are incapable of renovation of heart. They are, according to him, to be classed with brutes, as incapable of any sort of moral action, and therefore both of the blessing and of the curse. This Pelagian doctrine, it is apprehended few, who oppose infant baptism, will in these days, readily adopt. Certainly many antipœdobaptist writers contend for the opposite sentiment.— The limitation, which the Doctor's construction makes, is against the letter of the passage; and the principle upon which it is founded, is repugnant to the current of scripture. It is not contended, that infants are to blame that they are not baptized. Nor were they to blame, under the former dispensation, if they were not circumcised. But all are by nature children of wrath; and God has a sovereign right to extend salvation to whom he pleases; and to except whom, and in such a way as appears to him wisest, from being subjects of it. Allowing that, if infants are saved, they are saved wholly by grace, and as subjects of sanctification, we cannot reasonably consider the words of our Savior as less applicable to them than to adults. And if he designed the salvation of any of them; and we see that the promise of salvation terminates upon the seed, we shall be constrained to admit, that he has made provision for their being baptized. The passage then concludes, that baptism, according to Christ's institution, extends to proper subjects among infants, as well as to proper subjects among those who have arrived to adult years. Whether by the kingdom of God, is to be understood, the real church of the Messiah on earth; or that church in its glorified state in heaven, the conclusion is the same; though it seems necessary to understand the latter.

Surely no words can be plainer. Dr. Doddridge understands the passage of water baptism; and so did all antiquity. I do not see how it is possible to give any other construction of it, which shall be at all in agreement with the analogy of scripture, or with common sense. Poole, it is true, introduces a manner of constructing the passage, which some have been disposed to adopt, which makes this clause altogether figurative. But it is too absurd to be entitled to notice. Here is nothing like a figure, unless it be in the term *born*.

3. The fact, that Jewish believers continued, after the typical design of circumcision was answered, and till the distinction between Jew and Gentile was lost, to cirumcise their children, affords proof that baptism ought to be applied to the seed of Gentile believers. That this was a fact, has been sufficiently established, and probably no one will deny it. This fact has been introduced to prove the perpetuity of infant membership in the church of Christ. Now it is introduced in proof of infant baptism. If the children of Jewish parents were circumcised, because they were children of the covenant; and held with their parents a membership in the church, it seems but a necesary inference, that the children of Gentile parents, who are partakers of the same faith, and fellow heirs of the same blessing, should, as they are equally with the others, children of the covenant, and members of the family, be baptized. All the reasons there are for the one, exist with respect to the other.

4. The entire silence of scripture, as to limiting baptism to adult believers, is proof of the right of applying it to infants. The silence of scripture, as to infant baptism, is often urged by antipœdobaptists, as an unanswerable argument against it. But the argument in our hands, is altogether a better one than in theirs.—An explicit precept is not necessary where other evidence is clear. If we had no such evidence, then it might be admitted, that an explicit precept would be requisite. This is precisely the case with antipœdobaptists. They have scarcely a shred of an argument against infant membership, and infant baptism. In our opinion they have not even that. They scarcely attempt to prove a negative. The sorry plea, that baptism is placed in connexion with personal faith in adults, which is wholly irrelevant, is the sum of what they have to say. As they are so poorly furnished with other evidence; and oppose that, which, to say the least, has a considerable claim to be thought decisive, they ought to be able to produce an explicit restriction, which should finally determine the practice, and

speaking, that household baptism went through the whole Church at Corinth, the evidence for infant baptism, seems, even from this single source of argument, nearly conclusive. And the argument will appear the stronger when it is considered, how necessary it was, upon the opposite supposition, that there should be some cautionary notices to keep the reader from drawing such a conclusion. If a baptist had been to detail to us the facts respecting these several cases, is it to be imagined, he would not have been careful somewhere to insert a clause, or a word, to let his reader know, that there was here no baptism but upon the ground of personal faith? If he professed to be under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, his carelessness, in omitting every thing of his kind, would have been an objection, which it would have been difficult to obviate.

6. Historical testimony is corroborative of the evidence which the Gospel furnishes. This informs us, that infant baptism was received from the hands of the apostles, by the primitive Church; was in general practice in the first and purest ages; and has been uninterruptedly transmitted, through successive periods, to the Reformation; was not then rejected as a corruption of Rome, but adopted, as an important institution of God; and we know that it has been in the practice of incomparably the largest, and most enlightened part of the reformed Churches, to the present day.* Let us take a short survey of this evidence. Hallet, a learned and respectable writer, in his Notes, Vol. 3. page 338, makes this declaration, and appeals to the learned world for the truth of it. "Now it is a certain fact, as many of the primitive Christians have testified; and those who deny infant baptism acknowledge; that the baptism of infants is as ancient as the second century."

* I believe this assertion is not assuming. Let candor judge. We know that many late Baptists have distinguished themselves as men of parts and learning. We remember the names of Gale, Wall, Stennet, Fuller, Pearce, Rippon, and Ryland, with veneration. Many baptist teachers in our own Country have honored themselves by their literary attainments, and more by their piety; among whom I cheerfully rank the brethren, on whose publications I have been led to make some free remarks.

and Stephanas, and his household. The cases of the two former are to be found in Acts xvi. and shall be cited at large. "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, *and her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us."—The story of the jailor is this. "And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them, the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he sat meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Both these persons were inhabitants of Philippi, a city of Macedonia. Stephanas, as has been observed, was an inhabitant of Corinth, a city of Greece. The baptism of his household is but transiently mentioned. I. Corinthians i. 16. The reader will here recollect the remarks which have been made on the manner of the apostle's expressing himself in this place.

It is a fact, that in these three cases, there is not a syllable put down, purporting that there was a believer, except those who are personally mentioned. Lydia is mentioned in her case; and she only, as receiving the words which were spoken by Paul. But why should she only be mentioned as doing this, if others in her family, and especially all who composed it, were joined with her at that time in the faith? Would it be at all natural for one of our missionaries who should be sent into China to preach the Gospel, to report, that a certain female, at the head of a household, had received the word, omitting entirely to mention the members of her family, as subjects of the like faith, if they were in fact converted at the same time? Would not such an omission lead every reader to conclude that she was alone in believing? And if her family were baptized, would not every one understand they were baptized merely on account of her faith? "Yes," says the baptist, "if it were known that the missionary was a pœdobaptist." But if he had gone out an antipœdobaptist, would not this report lead his friends at once to suspect that he had changed his principles? Suppose it were not previously known, which of the opinions he entertained, would not the conclusion of every unprejudiced mind be the same? But this is not a parallel case. We have found there is much evidence indeed that the apostles went forth pœdobaptists. So far as this appears, the conclusion is, by the concession of baptists, the more irresistible. But, it is said, mention is made in the last verse of the chapter, of the household of Lydia as brethren. "And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen *the brethren*, they comforted them and departed." There is no evidence that these brethren belonged to Lydia's family. They might have been in her house transiently. Or, if it were to be allowed that they were of her family, there is no evidence that they were the *whole* of her family. If they were, who can discern the propriety of the historians mentioning her alone as a subject of faith, and

of his mentioning her *household* in a distinct view? Upon this supposition there was no baptizing of a *household.* The baptisms administered were on the ground of personal faith, as much as if the subjects of them had no previous connexion. The account respecting the jailor is similar to that of Lydia. He and he only is represented as brought under conviction, and putting the enquiry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" To him personally, the direction is given, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And upon the ground of his personal faith, the promise is added, "And thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The term believing, in the original, is in the singular, (πεπιστευκως) and applies to him only. Every circumstance concurs therefore, to impress the idea, that those who composed his house, were baptized by virtue of his faith. It is indeed said, that Paul and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." But preaching is not always, it is seldom followed with faith in them who hear. And not a word is said in this case, purporting, that those who were of his household believed; a circumstance which could hardly have been omitted, if it were a fact.

Nothing is said by Paul respecting the household of Stephanas, but simply that he baptized them.

Now, though it cannot be proved, yet every one will grant, there is ground for strong presumption in regard to each of these households, that there was one at least, whose infant age would not warrant baptism upon the ground of personal faith. Put the three households together and the presumption becomes proportionally stronger; that within the limits of the three, there was one such example. And we want but one, and the principle is decidedly gained. For the conduct of the Apostles was uniform. The reason which would justify infant baptism in a single case, would justify it in all cases.

Upon the whole, putting all these three cases together, and the circumstances of them, and connecting the strong probability, from the manner of Paul's

speaking, that household baptism went through the whole Church at Corinth, the evidence for infant baptism, seems, even from this single source of argument, nearly conclusive. And the argument will appear the stronger when it is considered, how necessary it was, upon the opposite supposition, that there should be some cautionary notices to keep the reader from drawing such a conclusion. If a baptist had been to detail to us the facts respecting these several cases, is it to be imagined, he would not have been careful somewhere to insert a clause, or a word, to let his reader know, that there was here no baptism but upon the ground of personal faith? If he professed to be under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, his carelessness, in omitting every thing of his kind, would have been an objection, which it would have been difficult to obviate.

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He remarks of Dr. Gale, the most accomplished of the opposers of infant baptism who have appeared, that "he does not attempt to name any one instance in those first ages, of a person born of, or belonging to Christians, whose baptism was deferred till he became of age, sufficient to be deemed a moral agent; and yet, he as good as owns that we have a right to demand such an instance."

Dr. Wall has searched with particular care into antiquity, to ascertain the fact respecting the primitive practice on this head. He is singularly learned on the subject, and writes with great candour. Those who would have an extended, and just view of this portion of evidence will consult his History of baptism, Dr. Gale's Reflections upon it, and Wall's Defence of his History against those Reflections. The chief of the historic evidence I shall produce will be taken from Wall, and rest upon his authority. It will not be worth while to produce here the quotations he has made from Hermas, Clement, Ireneus, or Tertullian; the earliest farthers of the Church; or the copious comments he has made upon them. The quotations from the three first of these fathers, are pretty clearly in favor of infant baptism. Tertullian, the baptists claim to themselves; but it is only on the ground of his advising *to defer* the baptizing of infants, except in cases of danger, till they arrive to years of discretion.* No advice like this is to be found in the writings of the other Fathers. At the same time he speaks of it, as a generally prevailing principle, that baptism is essential to salvation. This opinion certainly implies the prevalence, in the Church, of the practice of baptizing infants. His advice implies it also. For, why should this advice be given, if infant baptism were not in practice?

* Dr. Baldwin, if I apprehend him rightly, does as good as relinquish this pretended opposing evidence from Tertullian. He says, "It is evident beyond a doubt that the infants, whose baptism Tertullian opposed, were not *babes*; but probably children of seven or eight years old." Then they might be children in an entirely different predicament. They might be young converts to Christianity. Or, at least, they might not come under that description of infants for whose baptism we contend.

After all, there is reason to suspect, that this work, which is ascribed to Tertullian is really the production of a more modern writer. For neither Pelagius, nor his adherents produce this opinion of Tertullian, in their controversies with the Orthodox, which they could hardly have failed to do, if it had existed as an authentic, and acknowledged work of this Father.

Origen flourished about one hundred and ten years after the Apostles, or in the beginning of the third century. The quotations which Dr. Wall produces from this Father, even upon the confession of his adversary, Dr. Gale, decisively prove the prevalence of infant baptism at that time. The words of Gale are these, Reflections, page 5. 19. "And here indeed the passages cited, we confess, are full and plain testimonies for infant baptism; for, as Mr. Wall says, *The plainness is such as needs nothing to be said of it, or needs any thing to be said against it.* The only way he attempts to get rid of the proof, is by depreciating the translation.

The next father of note is Cyprian. He was bishop of Carthage, and flourished in the third century. Dr. Gale concedes, that the testimony of this Father to the prevalence of infant baptism in his time is full. And he admits that infant baptism was then practised in the Churches of Africa. Indeed he implicitly concedes, that after the year 250, infant baptism was in general practice throughout Christendom. For he does not attempt to invalidate the testimonies which Dr. Wall produces from following writers in regard to their times.

"As for infants," said Celestius, when under public examination on the subject of Original sin, anno 210. or thereabout, "I always said they stand in need of baptism, and ought to be baptized. Wall, page 62.

The Council convened in Carthage, anno 253, according to a quotation of Dr. Wall from Cyprian, Ib. page 76, say, in reply to the interrogatories of Fidus, a Country bishop, "But as to the case of infants, where, as you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule

of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born, *we are all in our Assembly of a contrary opinion.*" This unanimous contrary opinion, that children born of Christian parents ought to be baptized, without any such delay, most plainly involves the fact, that infant baptism was very generally practised as an indispensable duty in those days.

Austin, a father of great authority in the Church, flourished in the latter part of the fourth Century. His testimony to infant baptism, as a usage of the Church, received from the Apostles, is as express as it well could be. Wall, Vol. 1. page 187. "And if any one do ask for divine authority in this matter (the baptism of infants); though that which the *whole Church practices*, and which has not been instituted by Councils; but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing *delivered by the Authority of the Apostles.*" Again he says, Ib. page 213. "But the custom of our mother, the church, in baptizing infants, must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be other *than a tradition of the Apostles.*"

Page 227, he says, "Original sin is so plain by the scriptures, and that it is forgiven to infants in the laver of regeneration, (he means baptism) is so confirmed by the antiquity and authority of the Catholic faith; *so notorious by the practice of the church*, &c.

He says again (page 284.) "Now then since they generally grant, that infants must be baptized, as not being able to oppose the authority of *the whole church*, which was doubtless delivered by our Lord and his apostles."

Page 302. "For my part, I do not remember to have heard any thing from any christians, that received the Old and New Testament; neither from such as belonged to the Catholic church; nor from such as belonged to any sect or schism. I do not remember that I ever read otherways in any writer, that I could ev-

er find, treating of these matters, that followed the Canonical scriptures; or did mean, or did pretend to do so. From whence it is that this trouble is started upon us I know not. But a little while ago, when I was there at Carthage, I just cursorily heard some transient discourse of some people that were talking, that infants are not baptized for that reason that they may receive remission of sins; but that they may be sanctified in Christ."

It is to be remembered, that Austin is writing, not professedly in defence of infant baptism, but of original sin; that he is not opposing baptists, but the Pelagians. The fact, of the universal practice of the church in baptizing infants, he introduces as an argument to prove original sin. This practice he speaks of as handed down by tradition from the apostles, and as having been uninterrupted. He says that the whole church has declared that infants must be baptized. As but about 300 years intervened between the apostles and Austin; and as he was a bishop, and a man of uncommon learning, it seems impossible he should not know how the matter of fact was. Is it not easy for any man to ascertain, without hazard of mistake, what has been the public practice of the church in this article for the three last centuries? Could Austin be so imprudent as to appeal, in the face of the whole Christian world, and in a disputation with a subtil antagonist, to a thing, as a matter of fact, which fact was generally known to contradict?

No opposing testimony can be produced. Dr. Gale pretends to produce none prior to the letter of Polycrates, which is the feeblest imaginable; so feeble, that the Dr. gets it out of his hands as soon as possible. The proof amounts, according to him, only to a probability, that though Polycrates was born of Christian parents, he was not baptized till he came of adult years. What is produced from Tertullian we see is nothing. And with respect to the seven centuries succeeding the fourth, Dr. Gill thus concedes, "It is to be observed, that a large stride is taken by me

from the eleventh to the fourth century; not being able, in the space of more than 600 years, to find *one instance* of an opposer of infant baptism."

These direct testimonies on the one hand; the impossibility of finding contrary testimony on the other; and the full concessions of the most learned opposers of infant baptism, which have been quoted, furnish historic proof that we rightly construct the scripture in this article. If the christian church was established upon the antipœdobaptist principle, an entire change must have taken place through the whole extent of it; a change great indeed; against authority, example, conscience, and every sentiment of piety. But is this credible? Is it credible, that in a matter of such practical moment, so great a change should take place in so short a period, throughout the christian world; and yet the most learned opposers of infant baptism, by ransacking all antiquity for the purpose, be able to produce no traces of such a change, to point out no individual who lifted his voice against it, and scarce a symptom of opposition to the thing itself? Could such a change possibly take place, in ages so near the scene of apostolic instruction, and against authoritative precepts, (and such precepts there must have been, as we have seen, upon the supposition infant membership were revoked, and that infant baptism was not to be practised,) and yet not a whisper be heard from all Ecclesiastical history, respecting the commotion it must have raised, and the disputes there must have been on the subject?

I shall here take the liberty to introduce a quotation from Dr. Emmons's Sermon on Infant Baptism, in which this argument is justly illustrated. Page 37. "And now it is time to observe, that as there is no evidence to prove, that infant baptism was actually introduced, in either the first, second, or third century; so there is no evidence that it was even so much as *attempted*. This is remarkable indeed! Though we might suppose it possible to have introduced infant baptism into all the churches, in the course of the

three first centuries; yet we cannot suppose it was possible to have introduced it, without raising any controversy, or dispute about it among christians. If it was an innovation, and error, it must have been introduced gradually, and by means of preaching, conversing, and disputing. All innovations, errors, and heresies, are always introduced by some of these methods. No body, or bodies of men ever changed either their political, or religious sentiments all at once, without warm and lengthy disputes. This however we know was the case with the errors and heresies which corrupted and disturbed the churches, in the early ages of christianity. The errors introduced by Sabellius, Arius, and Pelagius, excited great commotions, as well as long and warm disputes in the churches of Christ. And if infant baptism had been an innovation, and a corruption of one of the peculiar ordinances of the Gospel, it could not have been introduced, in those early times among christians, without raising similar disputes, commotions, and divisions. But strange to say! The pen of history has not transmitted to us the least intimation of any public dispute about the doctrine of infant baptism; though it has recorded a dispute of far less consequence, respecting the *proper time* of baptizing infants. Dr. Mosheim has not only mentioned the principal errors and heresies which prevailed in the first, second, and third century; but even given us the names of the most noted heretics, and of their most noted antagonists. He has related the times when, and the places where those errors and heresies took their rise; and in several instances, marked the times, and means of their decline, and extinction. In particular he tells us when, and where, and by whom, the disputes about the Trinity, about the law of Moses, about the personal reign of Christ on earth, about the *baptism* of heretics, and about universal salvation, were carried on in the four first centuries, the very period when our brethren say, infant baptism must have been introduced, if it were not of divine original. But yet this same judicious and faithful historian, never

tells us when, nor where, nor by whom infant baptism was introduced into the church of Christ after the days of his apostles; nor says a single word about the cause, or consequences of such a great and interesting innovation. Interesting I say, because, if infant baptism had been an innovation, it would have had a greater tendency to disturb the peace and unity of the churches, than any other innovation which took place in the primitive days of christianity.—The silence of all history upon these points, amounts to a moral certainty, that infant baptism was not introduced into the church of Christ, in any period of the three first centuries after the apostles; and of consequence that it was derived from the opinion and practice of the apostles themselves. If we derive the origin of infant baptism from this pure source, all sacred and profane history, respecting this subject, will appear plain and consistent, from Abraham to Christ, and from Christ to this day. A standing ordinance is calculated to carry its own evidence with it, as long as it exists. If the apostles were enjoined by Christ to baptize infants, their practice in baptizing them, was calculated to perpetuate the practice, from time to time, and from age to age, to the end of the world. This uninterrupted practice of infant baptism, therefore, carries its own evidence, of its divine original."

Our brethren, the baptists, cannot, at best, trace their history any higher than the eleventh century.—They imagine that their predecessors are to be found in the *witnesses*, commonly called Albigenses, and Waldenses, who at this time, resisted with a noble independence of mind, the corruptions of Rome. It is not improbable that some of them called in question the right of infant baptism. But it is not made evident that they did generally. Indeed there is much evidence that they did not. As much as the character of this people is to be appreciated, their opinions are not to be received as authority. They were a sect, and sects are ever prone to run into extremes. By opposing perversions of truth, they are apt to become per-

verters of it themselves, in a contrary extreme. By resisting the abuses of an institution, they are liable to go into the denial of the institution itself. They seldom stop at the exact boundaries of truth. These remarks apply to this people. Dr. Mosheim, who certainly had no prejudices against them, observes thus respecting them. Eccles. History, Volume III. page 545. "It must indeed be acknowledged, that they who undertook, with such zeal and ardor, the reformation of the Church, were not, for the most part, equal to this arduous and important enterprize; and that by avoiding, with more vehemence than circumspection, certain abuses, and defects, they rushed unhappily into the opposite extremes. Hence their attempts of reformation, even where they were successful, were extremely imperfect, and produced little more than a motley mixture of truth and falsehood, of wisdom and indiscretion, of which we might allege a multitude of examples. They treated with the utmost contempt, all the external parts of religious worship; and aimed at nothing less than *the total suppression of sacraments*, churches, religious assemblies of every kind, and christian ministers of every order." I suspect that this picture is drawn in too unfavorable colors; but it shews that the opinions of these reformers are to be received with caution, and by no means as of authority.

The Doctor's idea of the origin of the baptists, he has expressed freely, in the following terms. Vol. IV. page 439. "The true origin of that sect, which acquired the denomination of the Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism, to those who came over to their communion, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is of consequence extremely difficult to be ascertained." If thus hidden, and unascertainable, is it to be imagined, that the primitive christian church was of this description? This testimony of Dr. Mosheim, has been produced as proof, that antipœdobaptism was taught and transmitted by the apostles, and was the practice of the church in the

first ages. But surely it proves just the opposite, as far as it proves at all. And it is evident he himself meant to convey an opposite idea.

When the reformation broke out, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, no organized denomination, by the name of anabaptists, was to be heard of. After Luther had stepped forward to resist the corruptions of the hierarchy, a few ventured out from their hiding places, in Bohemia, and parts adjacent. But they ran into licentious opinions and great extravagance of conduct, so that instead of aiding, they very much obstructed, and came near to subverting the Reformation.

It is an indisputable fact, that the Reformation, the most glorious triumph of truth over error, and religion over imposture, which the church has experienced since the days of the apostles, took place, not upon antipœdobaptist, but upon pœdobaptist principles. God interposed in signal favor to effectuate this event. The great promoters of it were men of eminent talents, learning, and piety; with whom the enthusiastic chiefs of anabaptism, the levellers of Munster, could bear no comparison. If therefore we are to consider prescription as proof, it will even in regard to modern times, be very much in favor of infant baptism.

It now presents itself as a question of great practical moment, How are the infant children of the church to be treated, by the officers and adult members of it? I shall take leave here, before the question is directly answered, to make two or thee remarks, which it is hoped will not be without their advantage. As a general principle, it ought to be understood of the children of the church, that they are the offspring of a matrimonial alliance wholly *in the Lord*. Such an alliance only is religious, is formed in faith, and is in agreement with the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ. Primitive Israel were forbidden to make any intermarriages with the idolatrous people around them. Their marriages were to be confined entirely to themselves. Deuteronomy vii. 3, 4. "Neither shalt thou make

marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other Gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." This law has all its force under the christian dispensation. It is founded in the essential difference there is, between the holy and the sinful character; and between the church, as a sanctified body, and the world. The church and the world are placed in a state of entire opposition to each other, and are proceeding to contrary destinies. The whole world lieth in wickedness. But the followers of Christ are called out of the world; they are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." They are to be separated from the world as of this character. All the connexions they form are to comport with it. Hence Paul, in the 7th chapter of I. Corinthians, where he is treating professedly on the subject of marriage, when he comes to answer the question of the lawfulness of a christian's marrying, decides in the affirmative; but expressly directs, that it be *only in the Lord.* Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Marriages formed upon unchristian principles are of the world, and have no connexion with the covenant of God. The root should be holy, that the branch may be holy. The fountain should be pure, or we have no warrant to expect that the stream will run clear.

Instead of being the fruit of a mere sensual intercourse, it ought to be understood, that the children of the church are conceived and brought forth *in faith;* that God is in view; and that his glory, in the advancement of Zion, is consulted. From their birth they ought to be considered as cast upon the bosom of the church as their common mother. All the adult members of the church, with their parents, as one united pious family, devoted to the single object of

religious duty, ought to receive them as their special charge; a charge sacred, and of incalculable value.

And now ought the work of training them up for God to be unitedly taken up, and steadily, and vigorously pursued. Every brother and sister should have a kindred interest in this matter. Their united, unceasing intercessions should be offered for them as subjects of believing prayer. At as early a moment as possible, they should be brought to the sanctuary; and by the united dedicatory vows of the whole church, be devoted to God in baptism. As they become capable of moral impressions, they ought to be addressed with all the means which God has provided; called, *the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

1. They ought to have the whole weight of a strictly pious example, addressed to them constantly, not by their parents only, but by the whole church. Example has a mighty effect. It is more familiar and intelligible than argument. It naturally draws to imitation. It engages the early attention of the infant mind.

That example may benefit, it should be uniform. It should not be self contradictory. It should appear in the many, and ever speak the same language. A mere moral example is not the thing intended. It must be an example flowing from a sanctified heart, a heart enriched with zeal for God, and his glory; zeal, which sanctifies all the words and actions of a man, and makes him a living image of Him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

2. To the influence of a uniformly holy example should be added a prudent and energetic government. This, during infancy and childhood, must necessarily be confined very much to parents. "I know Abraham," said God, "that he will *command* his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that God may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." It is true that religion cannot be forced into the mind of a child. It is in all cases voluntary. But is not authority among the means which God is graciously

pleased to use with us to reclaim and redeem us? Is not the discipline of his Providence, found, in many examples, salutary? Are not the severe strokes of his hand, and the terrifying denunciations of his word, adapted to awaken, to deter, and to bring sinners to Christ? The more gentle means of persuasion, it may be, are to be preferred. But are governmental restraints to be neglected? It is the determination of God, "He that spareth the rod, hateth his child." What son is there whom the affectionate father chasteneth not? Government is to be *maintained*, not with rashness, and undue severity, but under the influence of a tender concern for the everlasting welfare of the child. If professing parents should avail themselves of the whole weight of the authority of the church, when they find their own exertions ineffectual, it would coincide with the plan of infant membership which God has established in his kingdom. The children of the church may, and must be restrained from mingling, by a careless intercourse, with the irreligious and profane children of the world. They must be kept from temptation. They must be guarded against errors, and bad impressions of every kind; from partaking in fashionable follies, and from the seductive influence of bad example. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." It would be extremely desirable, and great sacrifices ought to be made for the sake of it, if these children of the church had their common school education entirely by themselves; in which case their instructor might be always a man of piety, and pious instruction might be wrought into all the daily exercises of the school. I cannot but urge upon christians the very great importance of such an arrangement.

3. The children of the church should have addressed to them from their parents; as occasion may offer from the brethren of the church; and from the pastor; and this with much tenderness and diligence, strict religious instruction. Instruction, in the domestic circle, was expressly enjoined by God upon primitive Israel, as an essential mean of carrying into effect the

promises of his covenant. The parent was required to make religion the subject of his perpetual conversation in the family, and this under the influence of love.— "Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and these words which I command thee this day, *shall be in thine heart*, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." So diligent, so constant, so indefatigable, and affectionate were the people of God required to be in instructing their children in the doctrines and duties of revealed religion. It was to be the main business, not of sabbaths only, but of every day. The duties which devolve upon the pious parent, in this respect, are certainly not diminished under the christian dispensation. These injunctions are as obligatory as they ever were. Religious instruction is a mean, as perfectly adapted to the end, as it ever was. Motives to it are multiplied exceedingly, as light respecting the eternal world is increased. Parents are better qualified to give instruction. The Bible is in their hands. They can easily recur to examples, to reasonings, to illustrations, to entreaties, promises, and threatenings. For they are all to be found plentifully in the Bible.— Explanations from other books, and from the pulpit add to the means. The earliest moments of capacity should be embraced. These are the golden moments of a religious education. In the spring of life should the seed of grace be diligently sown; and never should the parent withhold his hand. No seeming want of success should slacken his labors. Patience should have its perfect work; and perseverance its full effect. At as early a period as possible, these children should be made conversant with the holy scriptures. They

should be carefully catechized, taught pious hymns, and suitable prayers. They should be put as much as may be, in the way of receiving religious impressions, and guarded as carefully from every thing of an opposite tendency. They should be brought from their early childhood, and with constancy to the house of worship on Lord's days. The brethren, and especially the pastor, should unite promptly, with the parent in this work of instruction. And it should be addressed to the minds of children with interest. Obligation should be set before them in all its *weight*. They should be urged with duty, and as it were, compelled to yield to it.

Such a procedure is the grand mean of salvation which the covenant has provided. Ephesians vi. 4. "And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in *the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" In the nature of it, it implies long forbearance. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early, and the latter rain."

God is a sovereign, and he will give efficacy to these means or not, as pleaseth him. But his word shall prosper unto the thing whereunto it is sent. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Undiminishable is the fountain of grace. Infinitely disposed must God be to succeed institutions, and give efficacy to means of his own appointment. His absolute promises secure their effect in the entire salvation of *the seed.* The abundant, and endearing encouragements of his word, are calculated to warm the hearts of the parent, of the brotherhood, and of the pastor; to give wings to their zeal, and importunity to their prayers, in behalf of the lambs of the flock. Motives rush on the mind, to rouse its vigor, and prompt to diligence. And with much diligence, much success is to be hoped for. But these means will certainly have their effect in the one way or the other, as a sa-

vour of life unto life ; or of death unto death. As they are multiplied, the mind of the child will shew its character. A listless indifferency will be impossible. Unholy affection repels instruction, as certainly and as uniformly, as holy affection receives it. In an evident fitness for admission to the holy supper, and a participation in all the privileges of a believing state, or for formal excommunication, this process will certainly result.

The membership of infants, though as complete as that of adult believers, is of a lower grade, not involving the same profession, not leading to the immediate enjoyment of the same privileges, nor binding to the same duties. Infants are complete members of the *family* into which they are born; but they are at present mere objects of care. They are incapable of the services which devolve upon the grown members of it.

They are complete members of the *State*. But they are not fit to be turned into soldiers, or clothed with office.

It is often asked, if children are born members of the Church, and are to be baptized as being such, Why are they not all to be led to communicate at the Lord's table? It might as pertinently be asked, if children are born members of the state, Why are not some of them sent ambassadors to foreign courts? When it shall be proved, that membership in a civil community always involves a capability of performing every part of the service which is done in it, then it may be admitted, that infant membership in the Church, involves a capability to communicate at the Lord's table. If no other qualifications are necessary for communicating, than are necessary for baptism, then undoubtedly baptized infants ought immediately to communicate. It has been proved that the entire passivity of the infant in circumcision was understood. Circumcision had its most express signification upon this principle. The seed were covenanted *about*. The covenant fully embraced them while as yet they were perfectly ignorant of it, and unconscious of the design of the circumcision

they sustained. Just so it is with baptism. If entire passivity be also understood in communicating at the Lord's table, then it may be correct to argue from the one to the other. But the case is quite otherways. In this respect the ordinances are totally dissimilar. Personal, intelligent agency, is always supposed in a participation of the supper. The law is, "Take, eat; this is my body, broken for you. *This do in remembrance of me.*" Can this law apply to an absolute ideot? Is he capable of fulfilling it? Can he evangelically discern the Lord's body? The infant *is, if possible,* more incompetent to the agency required than the ideot. The enquiry then, Why do you not put infants to communicating, presents no kind of objection to to the hypothesis of their membership.

As the infant is not qualified to come to the table of the Lord, neither does it follow from its membership, that it is qualified to vote in the deliberations of the Church, or to sustain an office. "Now this I say that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all. But is under tutors and governors, untill the time appointed of the father." There is an analogy between the two cases.

Moral agents can never be bound any farther than they have natural ability to act. If knowledge is requisite, as it is with respect to these duties, it must be possessed. If bodily strength is necessary, it must be enjoyed. If opportunity be wanting, it must be given. Children become obliged so far as, and no farther than, they become possessed of capacity.

If the means used are blessed to the apparent sanctification of these children, there will be no hesitation, on the part of the Church, to admitting them to the table of the Lord. If not, the opposite will appear in contumacious and ungodly conduct, which will make it necessary for the Church to separate them from their society.

To what period trial is to be protracted, and forbearance is to be exercised, the word of God does not seem clearly to determine. It does not with respect to

adults, whose characters are doubtful, or who are brought under a diciplinary process. God sets us an example of long suffering; which it would seem we ought to imitate. But his long suffering has its limits, and there ought to be bounds to that of his people. A regard to the general interest of Christianity must govern.

Excommunication, though an act of just severity, is a kind expedient. It is calculated; and were the plan of the covenant carried into faithful, uniform, and efficient practice, would be much more powerfully calculated, than we can now well conceive, to save the soul from death. That such is the natural tendency, and end, of all discipline, and of excommunication itself, is evident from Paul's words, I Cor. v. 5. "To deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*"

No believing parent can be unwilling to yield his child to such a maternal treatment from the Church. He who refuses to do so, must be considered as rejecting the covenant, despising the authority of God, and cruelly disregarding the eternal well being of his child.

If such a system of instruction, watchfulness, and dicipline, were pursued with respect to infant members, it is evident, no reason could exist, for the objection which some are disposed to make to the doctrine of infant membership, that it is a principle calculated to destroy the spirituality of Churches, and turn them into societies of formalists and hypocrites. "It is the direct way," it is said "to form great national Churches, which are good for nothing; but a real, living, spiritual Church, cannot exist upon this principle." Let us not judge too rashly. Let us well consider what sort of premises they are, from which we draw so formidable a conclusion. Let us beware how we make use of the horrid neglects of men to decry the economy of God. Has the all wise God established his Church upon a constitution calculated to ruin it? Does not the opposite very plainly appear? Is not the system consistent in itself? Has it not an extent and grandeur, consonant to the covenant, and worthy of its contriver? Is it not

disembarrassed of the contradictions in practice of other theories? Are not the means adapted to the end? Is not the end secured by absolute promise? If the scheme of infant membership were faithfully carried into execution must not the Church, altogether more than upon the opposite principle, "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and be terrible as an army with banners?" Can it be possible that, with such an object in view, and with such perpetual activity in the employment of means, a Church should sink into greater carnality, than without the object, and in the disuse of the means?

But it is said farther, "such discipline is impracticable." Why impracticable? Nothing is to be done, but what may easily be done; nothing but what benevolence dictates. It is indeed difficult to serve God, and Mammon; to be diligent in the duties of piety, and at the same time buried in worldly pursuits. By many Churches, every essential doctrine and duty of Christianity is trampled in the dust; experimental religion is discarded; nothing that is right is practicable. They have a name to live, but are dead. The covenant of God is not with them, and nothing is done in compliance with it. The institutions of God are sunk into abuse; and his offerings made offensive.

But with real Christians, with men who are created anew in Christ Jesus, and led by the Spirit of God, there is nothing in the scheme of infant membership which is impracticable. Very much indeed will be to be done. But we are told to do, with our might, whatsoever our hand findeth to do, in obedience to to Christ, and for the glory of his kingdom, while it is day; for that the night cometh wherein no man can work. Self denial must be practised. But in vain do we expect to meet the final approbation of our judge without the constant practice of it. For "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Therefore *we labor*, that whether present, or absent, we may be accepted of him."

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Respecting the abrogation of the Sinai Covenant, and the difference between the dispensation which preceded, and that which followed, the advent of the Messiah.*

THE Sinai Covenant has been examined, distinguished from the Covenant of circumcision, proved to have been superadded to it, and temporay in its duration; and it has been shewn, that it terminated at the appearing of the Messiah. Its purpose being answered as an intervening mean, it was then abolished. But it becomes a question of great importance, in what sense, and how far it was abolished. It is as dangerous to consider those institutions of the Deity annulled, which remain in all their force; as it is to perpetuate appointments, which he, by his authority, has made void.

The explanations which have been given, will assist us to understand what is meant in the scriptures by the abrogation or disannulling of the Sinai covenant. They will aid us to determine what, pertaining to this covenant is, and what is not, now obligatory upon christian believers. For our greater security, we will here collect the several passages in the New Testament, which expressly speak of this subject.

The first distinct mention of it that I observe, is in II. Corinthians iii. 7. The words in this place are, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away." The term glory is a supplement made by the translators. Perhaps it is correct. But this glory, which seems to have been external and visible, was expressive of the inherent excellency of the law.

It was the law which was written, and engraven in stones. The law is the Testament to which the New Testament is contrasted in the context. The law is the letter which killeth; as we have it in the preceding verse. The law, and that only, is the ministration of death, and condemnation. That it is the law, which the apostle speaks of as done away, is evident from the 11th verse. "For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." It was not properly the glory which was done away; but that which is *characterized* as glorious. This was the law. Law, we have seen, was the constituent principle, the chief matter of the Sinai Covenant.

The next passage, which speaks of the abrogation of the Sinai Covenant, is in Gal. iii. 19. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Here the Sinai covenant is spoken of expressly as *the law*. It was evidently the law which was added. The conditional promises were not. For they are involved in, and published with God's gracious covenant, under every dispensation of it. The curse was not added as peculiar to this covenant. It extends to all times, and applies to every individual, who is not interested in God's gracious covenant. The law also meets the design which the apostle expresses. It was added *because of transgressions*; "i. e. to convince of sin, and keep up a remembrance of it; to remove all hope upon the ground of personal desert, and to impress the absolute necessity of salvation by grace. An equivalent manner of expression we have in Hebrews x. 13. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins every year." In like manner the apostle says, Romans vii. 7. "Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." These passages unite in the idea, that the great design of the dispensation of the Si-

nai law, was to convince men of sin, and thus to shut them up to the faith of the Gospel. In this view it is styled a schoolmaster, verse 24. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

The apostle says, the law was added *till the seed should come.* This mode of speaking implies, that then, at the coming of the Messiah, it was set aside. Coincident with which is the idea, suggested in the 25th verse. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." This implies a disconnexion from the law, or that it ceases to bind.

Another passage to the same purpose is found in Ephesians ii. 14, 15. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished, in his flesh, the enmity, *even the law of commandments*, in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace." The terms of this passage inform us expressly what was abolished by the incarnation and death of Christ. It was the law of commandments in ordinances. This idea is perfectly conformable to the passages before introduced.

The next passage which claims to be noticed, as instructing us in the abolition of the Sinai covenant, is in Colossians ii. 14. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." According to these words, the abolition extended to the handwriting of ordinances. This was the Sinai law.

The subject is introduced several times into the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is thus mentioned in the 7th chapter, 18th verse. "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." This commandment, which is here expressly said to be disannulled, is called, in the next verse, the law. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." It is mentioned again in the 8th chap. 13th verse. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old,

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." These expressions imply the abolition of the first or Sinai covenant. What the writer especially means, by this first covenant, as the subject of this abolition, we seem to be clearly taught in the 3d and 4th verses of the chapter. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest; seeing that there are priests which offer sacrifices according to the law." Here the law, instituting sacrifices, is brought into view, as superceded by the Gospel. The law then, we are to understand as decayed, and vanished away.

This idea is expressly brought into view in the first verse of the next chapter. "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary." The 10th verse is to the same purpose. "Which stood in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation."

The forepart of the 10th chapter of this Epistle furnishes farther intimations of the abolition of the Sinai covenant; and these intimations have all evident respect to law. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered, year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then, would they not have ceased to be offered?" This enquiry supposes that they have ceased to be offered since the purpose for which they were instituted is answered, in the efficient sacrifice of the Son of God; and therefore that the law enjoining them is no longer in force. Their continuance under the authority of law, would imply the inefficacy and inutility of his sacrifice. The law therefore, must of necessity be abolished.

This is confirmed by what is said in the 5th and 6th verses. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering, thou wouldst not, nei-

ther hadst pleasure therein, (which are offered by the law.) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first*, that he may establish the second." These words clearly teach, that those sacrifices and offerings which the law enjoined, are discontinued, by the authority of God. The law requiring them is therefore revoked.

These passages are all in the same strain. And they unitedly teach, that it is the Sinai covenant merely as law, which is abolished. The term covenant when it refers to the Sinai dispensation, and is contrasted to the Gospel, generally means, in the Epistles, mere law.

But Jesus Christ expressly tells us, that he came not to annul the law. Matthew v. 17, 18, 19. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Accordingly he goes on to confirm the authority of the law, in all the strictness and spirituality of it. He condemns all the subtractions, commutations, and licentious comments, to which the scribes and pharisees had subjected it. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.—Be ye therefore perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." Thus the law which was published at Sinai, and of which Paul makes mention as convincing of sin, has a perpetual and irrevocable establishment under the Gospel dispensation. And the curse attached generally to law, the wages of sin, is so far from being annulled by Christ, that he confirms it, and in many places asserts in a very solemn manner that it shall be carried into complete effect. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

How are these things to be reconciled? If we consider the words of our Savior as applying to the whole law, they are plainly inconsistent with the testimony of the Apostles. There is no way to make the scripture in this respect consistent with itself, but to distinguish between the two different descriptions of law; that which is commonly and properly called *moral*, and that which is *positive*. The moral law is that which extends to all intelligent creatures, to all times, places, and circumstances. It is that law which expresses the universal, and unalterable principles of right, the spirit and extent of obligation towards God, and such of his creatures as are proper objects of benevolent affection. Love is the fulfilling of this law. Love is what it summarily requires. This law was in force long before the institution of the Sinai covenant. It was necessarily at the foundation of all the precepts of that covenant, and obedience to it was implied in all the obedience which was rendered to that covenant. Still it was not peculiar to it. That which was peculiarly the Sinai law, as an added law, consisted of positive precepts, which obliged to certain actions, which could not have been obligatory in any other way; actions

which became duty only on this ground, and which were appropriate to those, whom these precepts respected. Such precepts as merely determine the manner in which holy love shall manifest itself, and which may be suspended in consistency with a man's being still holden to be perfectly holy, it is evident may be enacted or revoked at pleasure. Such precepts have the distinct character of positive; and such was the precise nature of the law, which constituted appropriately the Sinai covenant, and which is spoken of as abrogated at Christ's coming. Accordingly it is to be observed, that in all the passages which have been quoted, in which the Sinai law is introduced, reference is evidently had to this class of precepts. The sacrifical worship is principally in view; as superceded by the one efficacious sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The precepts which enjoined this sort of worship are called repeatedly *ordinances of divine service*. They enjoined a series of observances, which were a shadow of good things to come. They were a middle wall of partition, i. e. they erected a system of ritual service, which necessarily produced a complete external separation from the rest of mankind. It was not at all the tendency of the mere moral law to do this. It was the effect of a law of a peculiar and distinct character. This law was necessarily abrogated when its special purposes were answered, when the distinction between Jew and Gentile was done away, and the kingdom of the Messiah ceased to have a local position.

It was impossible that the moral law should be thus dispensed with. God can never relinquish his rights as the governor of his intelligent creatures. He can never withdraw his authority from them, by giving them up to lawless disorder. He cannot give them a licence to exercise malignant affections, or to carry them out into overt action. He cannot fail to bind them by law to be constantly, and perfectly holy.

Hence it is noticeable, that the confirmation which our Savior gives has respect altogether to the moral

law; and not to any of those positive precepts which were peculiar to the Sinai dispensation.

To discriminate the precepts of the abolished law, so as to leave the moral law, which was interwoven with it entire, may be a work of some difficulty. But this law may, I think, be discriminated under the characters of *typical, sacerdotal, local, governmental, and penal.*

1. Those precepts which respected institutions merely *typical*, are of the law which is abolished. That the institutions of the Sinai covenant, had principally, a typical design, and in that light instructed the people of Israel in Gospel truth, will not be denied. We are expressly told that the law had a *shadow* of good things to come; and that the cleansings, sacrifices, and atonements it ordained, were a *figure* for the time then present. The shadow is certainly useless since the substance has appeared. The law which presented this shadow must of course have ceased. To continue the type would imply that the antitype had not come. This is what our Savior probably intended when he said at the moment that he expired, "It is *finished.*" It is not consistent with the brevity consulted to point out these precepts distinctly. Nor can it be necessary. The tabernacle, the altar, the incense, the sacrifices, the sprinkling of blood, the offerings, and atonements, come evidently under a typical character.

2. That part of the law which we have presumed to denominate *sacerdotal*, is evidently of the law which is disannulled. No doubt the priesthood was in a measure typical. The office of the high priest is expressly alluded to in that light. But the priesthood was ordained for a special service. The whole tribe of Levi was set apart to this service, immediately or remotely. The duties of the priests are distinctly pointed out in the law, the manner of their consecration, their attire, and the period of their service; and particular laws were given to provide for their comfortable subsistence among their brethren. All these laws beyond a doubt are disannulled, as the tabernacle is taken down, and

all the services of it at an end. Since there is a change in the priesthood, "there is made of necessity a change also of the law;"* in all the parts of it which respected the priesthood.

3. So far as the law is of a *local* character, it must be understood to be abolished. It pleased God to plant his Israel in a particular territory; by which they were locally separated from the other parts of the world. In consequence of this appointment, the tribes were territorially distributed, and had their precise boundaries. The tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, in which the sacrifices were to be offered, where the feasts were to be kept, and the worship of God was publicly celebrated, had a fixed place. The law, so far as it is of this character must have ceased to oblige, since an end has been put to this territorial establishment. The laws respecting leprosy, ceremonial purifications, things clean and unclean, clothing, tythes, first fruits, general convocations, &c. seem to be of this class.

4. That part of the law which may be considered as *governmental*, i. e. which respected the ordering of the society, must be understood to belong to the law which is abolished. There was a species of government in Israel somewhat resembling the arrangements of ordinary civil government. This might not improperly be called the economy of the society. There was a council of seventy erected by divine appointment.—There were rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. These were denominated judges. The priesthood was invested with an authority peculiar to itself. To this authority the people were to repair in questions of difficulty. In controversies between man and man, the judges were to preside as arbitrators. There were besides, rules determining who should act as soldiers in the camp, the manner of carrying on war, and the treatment of captives. Under this head may be classed also those directions which related to the alienation and redemption of property, inheritances, personal wrongs,

* Hebrews vii. 12.

frauds, and marriages. All these laws, and this economy, had evident respect to Israel, as occupying the land of promise, and were of a subordinate nature. When Israel ceased to occupy this land; and was entirely new modified under the direction of Christ, these laws necessarily lost their authority. They cannot be obligatory upon christians in these days, nor determine the manner in which the christian church is to be governed. One great object of the Messiah's appearing, was to *order* and *establish* his kingdom forever. How he ordered it in this respect, we are to learn, not from the law which preceded; but from the appointments which followed.

5. That which may be considered as the *penal* part of the Mosaic institute, must be of that law which is abolished. No part of this penal code appears to have an establishment in the New Testament. It was evidently a system appropriate to the dispensation which preceded Christ's coming, and that state of the church which precluded the control of ordinary civil government. The covenant making no provision for the actual sanctification of all the visible members of the society, the entire moral purity of it was not secured. It was supposed, of course, that overt crimes might be committed, and that wrongs might be done. It was necessary that motives resulting from the exercise of immediate retributive justice, should be presented to prevent them. It was necessary that their influence should be counteracted, when committed. It was no less proper therefore that the church should have the power of life and death in its hands, than that the civil magistrate should. If capital punishment be necessary in the one case, it might be in the other. The church is now in an entirely different condition from what it was at that period. It exists in a dispersed, moveable state, among the civil governments of the world. The penal law is now inapplicable to its condition. The ultimate exercise of power among christians, by the express direction of Christ, is confined to this. "Let him be unto thee, as an heathen man, and a publican."

Other sorts of punishment can be inflicted by the civil magistrate only.

It is not to be understood that all the positive precepts of the Old Testament belonged peculiarly to the Sinai covenant. The sabbath, circumcision, and the passover, were positive institutions, and obligatory by positive precepts. It has appeared that these were established before the Sinai covenant was introduced. The prohibition of the use of blood, as food, was given before this covenant was established. This law, with that which respects fornication, has an express confirmation in the New Testament. The law which forbade the children of Israel to intermarry with the idolatrous people around them, seems to be a law which is attached to the church through every period of its existence. Accordingly this also has an express confirmation in the New Testament. The laws in favor of the manumission, and kind treatment of servants, are evidently founded in humanity; and so far as they are, may be considered as explanatory of the general principle taught by Christ; "And whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, that do ye also to them." The laws respecting usury and pledges, are plainly implied in the general christian law of brotherly love. To all duty of this kind, that precept of our Savior extends; "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again."

These precepts do not come under either of those characters which have been given to the abolished law.

Upon a general comparison of the two dispensations, that which preceded, and that which followed Christ, it is evident that in their moral nature, they are precisely the same. The one is not more spiritual than the other. The moral law has the same authority in both. Both are alike founded in grace: And the qualifications for membership are the same in the one which they are in the other. The only considerable difference which is to be observed, seems to be in the form, which the church, under the latter dispensation has assumed, and the great augmentation of light, and gra-

cious influences which it has enjoyed. The Gospel has undoubtedly brought to the world a vast addition of light. The fulfilment of prophecies and promises, in a series of facts, has confirmed the truth of scripture testimony, and shewn more clearly to mankind the nature of the marvellous work of redemption. It has illustrated the glory of Jehovah's character, and brought life and immortality more clearly into view. It has multiplied motives to piety, and greatly increased the number of the subjects of it. The spirit is given in more plentiful effusions, and grace is more triumphant. But it has been shewn that this increase of light and grace, cannot be drawn into an argument against the identity of the Jewish and Christian church. Differences, as great in these respects, are observable in particular periods of the last dispensation. The difference between the states of the church in the eleventh, and the sixteenth centuries, is at least as great as is to be observed between the two dispensations generally. And the difference between its present state, and that which is approaching, in the ingathering of the Jews with the fulness of the Gentiles, must be greater still.

This very interesting event, which is a leading subject of the faith and prayers of all the people of God, so far as it falls within the plan of this treatise, we will next briefly consider.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Respecting the conversion of the rejected Jews, their restoration to the land, secured to them in the covenant, and the ingathering of the fullness of the Gentiles; which events are to introduce the millennial glory.*

IT may have been an objection in the mind of the reader to the theory which has been exhibited, that the posterity of Abraham have, in fact, been cast out for centuries, from the land of Canaan. This objection, which has considerable plausibility, ought to be obviated. It cannot be obviated, unless it can be made to appear, that the posterity of Abraham either do, or are yet to possess this land, according to covenant. It was given them, as an unalienble possession, by will. If it has been enjoyed but for a time, and this under great interruptions, and it is never again to come into their possession, some embarrassment will seem to attend the scheme which has been advanced.

Though interpretations of prophecy, not yet fulfilled, must always be in some measure doubtful; yet it is to be presumed, God has so far instructed us into the manner in which the covenant is to be executed, that no insuperable objection can lie against it.

It has appeared that the covenant absolutely secured a succession of pious persons, in the posterity of Abraham, constituting the seed, in the proper, literal sense of that term; and that of these, as heirs by natural descent, the kingdom of Christ primarily consists.

Such a succession must be supposed therefore in the Christian Church; though, since the distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away, we are incapable of pointing them out, as such. Our not being able to do this, is certainly not inconsistent with the supposed fact, that such a succession has taken place.

The certainty of it rests upon the best foundation; that of covenant promise. We need only to be sure; and it is thought abundant proof has been furnished, that the promise is absolute. Let there be but a remnant, and the promise stands. If there be not, God hath certainly cast away his people.

It is probably not possible to prove from history, that there has been yet any period of time, in which there have been no Christian believers within the limits of the land of Canaan. History favors the idea that there have ever been such, more or fewer. *These*, or some of them, may have been lineal descendants from Abraham. What can be more likely than this supposition? If so, then the seed designed in the covenant have never been disseized of this inheritance.

If we look back to the period of the Babylonian captivity, we shall find reason to conclude, that during the whole of the time that captivity lasted, there was a remnant which continued to hold the possession. The seed were not ejected. Let us, to convince ourselves of this, here recal into view the passage in the 6th chapter of Isaiah. "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understsnd not; and see ye *indeed*, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, O Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the land be uterly desolate. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet, *in it* shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." This passage, though somewhat obscure, is clearly in favour of the idea to prove which it is produced. The words, *in it*, must refer to the land, which was to be desolated. And the words *a tenth*, must refer to a favored remnant. The clos-

ing words of the verse are clearly in favor of this construction. The words, *and shall be eaten*, are apparently against it, and must be a bad translation. Surely the remnant are not to be spared merely for destruction. Poole and Vitringa give different expositions of this clause. They are both in favor of the passive rendering. But, according to Vitringa, several learned critics render it actively. An active rendering, i. e. that they should return to eat or waste away their enemies, seems to be necessary to make it agree with the rest of the verse, the context, and the scheme of the Bible. But however this clause is to be rendered, and whatever be the meaning of it, the residue of the verse is decidedly in favor of the continuance of a part of Judah in the land. They are compared to a tree, whose foliage is gone. The tree itself remains, keeps its place in the earth, lives, and thrives.

If we recur to the history, we find it said, II Kings, xxv. 12. "But the captain of the guard, left of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen." These would be more probably inheritors of the blessing than their richer neighbors. For God hath chosen the poor of this world.

The same thing is intimated in Nehemiah, i. 3. "And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the Province, are in great affliction, and reproach; the wall also of Jerusalem is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." There is then no evidence of an entire ejection during this captivity. The evidence is against it. Some were left when the captivity began; and when it closes, some are still found in the land.

The present dispersion of the unbelieving Jews resembles that captivity. Analogy would lead us to presume, that a part at least of the remnant, whose history we have traced as far as the scripture would carry us, remained within the limits of the land of Canaan, and that their descendants have continued to occupy it to the present day,

I find little in Dr. Mosheim's History, which is explicit and demonstrative on this subject. But there are several passages which imply, that this has been the fact. In his history of the second Century he tells us, Vol. I, page 159; "But it was not from the Romans alone, that the disciples of Christ were to feel oppression. Barchochebas, the fictitious king of the Jews, whom Adrian afterwards defeated, vented against them all his fury; because they refused to join his standards, and second his rebellion." This remark will surely apply to no disciples of Christ but such as were of Jewish descent, and lived in Palestine. In the II. Vol. of his history, page 24, the following passage is found. "It was much about this time, that Jevenal, bishop of Jerusalem, or rather of Œlia,* attempted to withdraw himself and his church from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cesarea, and aspired after a place among the first Prelates of the Christian world. The high degree of veneration, and esteem, in which the church of Jerusalem was held, among all Christian Societies (on account of its rank among the apostolical churches, and its title to the appellation of the Mother Church, as having succeeded the first Christian Assembly founded by the appostles) was extremely favorable to the ambition of Juvenal, and rendered his project much more practicable than it would otherways have been." Maclaine, his translator, subjoins the following observation in a note. "After the destruction of Jerusalem, the face of Palestine was almost totally changed; and it was so parcelled out, and wasted by a succession of wars, and invasions, that it preserved scarcely any traces of its former condition. Under the Christian Emperors there were three Palestines formed out of the ancient country of that name, each of which was an episcopal see. And it was over these three dioceses that Juvenal usurped and maintained the jurisdiction." Surely these accounts imply, that there were at this time many Christians of Jewish descent inhabiting the land of Canaan. In the 157 page of this Vol. where Mosheim is speaking of the events which happened in

* The city was generally called Œlia, at that time.

the seventh century, he remarks thus; "In the eastern Countries, and particularly in Syria and Palestine the Jews at certain times, attacked the Christians with merciless fury." There were then at this time also many Christians in this land. He mentions Comas, as a bishop of Jerusalem, in the eighth century, who acquired considerable reputation for sacred poetry. The oppressions which the Christians in Palestine suffered from the Saracens, constituted the reason, or the principal motive, which was holden forth to Christendom for the crusades.

And modern travellers tell us, that there are now a considerable number of Christians in that country. Some of them may be sincere believers.

But let us allow that the seed of Abraham are completely ejected. Then the promise must be interpreted as general and final. It is a fact, that from the time that Jacob went down into Egypt to the passage of Jordan under the conduct of Joshua, the seed of Abraham had not actual possession of the land. If this be reconcileable with the execution of the promise, as all concede that it is, then the present dispersion may be reconcileable with it, though involving a complete ejection of longer continuance.

When the Jews were restored to the land of Canaan from their seventy years captivity in Babylon, they were undoubtedly restored in execution of covenant promise. Should this land be again put into possession of Abraham's descendants, now dispersed among the nations; be holden by them exclusively, finally, and under circumstances of greater glory than has yet been experienced; it will be allowed by those who witness this event, that the promise has in no article failed. If there be evidence in the scripture that this is *designed*, we ought to look upon it as though it were a reality. And this evidence ought to be received as obviating the objection. It shall be our object therefore now, to prove, that this event is to take place.

The preceding events, the time, the manner, the attending circumstances, and the consequences; their na-

ture, extent, and duration; cannot, consistently with the limits we have prescribed to ourselves, be here explained. These subjects are indeed of the most interesting concern, and fall perfectly within the plan of the present work. But the discussion would lead to deep and extensive research; and if pursued, it must be done in a supplementary volume.

At present it will be sufficient to furnish proof that a restoration is to take place.

There are several things in the transactions of God with Abraham, and in the history of the patriarchs, which imply such an event. Abraham's call had immediate, and express respect to the land of Canaan. The land was promised, not to his seed only, but to him personally. Genesis xiii. 15.—"For all the land which thou seest, *to thee will I give it*, and to thy seed forever." 17th verse. "Arise walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; *for I will give it unto thee.*" The words have express respect, not only to his seed, but to him personally. Abraham himself was to inherit it. A miracle was wrought to assure him of it. See the 15th chapter. In the 17th chapter, 8th verse, it is promised to *him* distinctly, and secured to him as an everlasting possession. Yet it is remarked, and evidently remarked with design, by the Martyr Stephen, Acts vii. "And he gave him none inheritance in it; no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." Agreeably to this it is remarked in the eleventh of Hebrews, that Abraham went into a place which he should *after receive* for an inheritance; and that he sojourned in the land of promise as in a *strange country*, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." This idea is suggested also in Exodus vi. 4. "And I have also established my covenant with them, (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage; *wherein they were strangers.*" These passages unitedly inform us

that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were mere strangers in this country; and that they never had actual possession of it according to promise. How are these facts reconcileable with the execution of the covenant? Perhaps the fulfilment of this article of it is yet a future event. So far as the scriptures favor this idea, and it is apprehended they do favor it greatly, they authorize us to expect a restoration. There are several circumstances also in the history of the patriarchs, which pretty evidently look forward to such an event. God's plan is one, is of a piece, and reaches down to very remote periods of time. Many of the events which go to constitute this plan, considered in themselves, may seem frivolous, and not worth detailing in a serious narrative; yet may be important in their connexion with the result. The formal purchase of the cave of Machpelah; the burial of Sarah, of Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah in that place; the oath imposed by Jacob, and taken by Joseph, that he would see that his father's bones had sepulture there; the care with which, in conformity to a similar oath, the bones of Joseph were carried up by the Israelites when they left Egypt for the same purpose; the language of heirship to this land, which is wrought into the covenant, and runs through every part of scripture; the ejection of the idolatrous inhabitants of the land, as intruders, by a series of miracles; the very much that is said of this land in distinction from all other lands, as specially God's property; (see Leviticus xxv. 23) as a land which God's eye is perpetually upon, and which he careth for; and its being made expressly typical of the blessedness of saints, which is not limited in duration, seem to look forward, with no little force of evidence, to a final, and peculiarly triumphant possession of this land. Christ is eminently the heir. He is heir of the aggregate good conveyed in the promises. But it cannot be supposed he has ever yet entered into possession, according to the true intent of this character. It would seem he must yet, at some period, eject his enemies; who, to the prejudice of his rights, and

of a prediction. The apostate Jews are then to be brought to a general repentance. The consequence will be the execution of the Abrahamic covenant in their behalf. And this execution of the covenant is particularly to respect the land. Why does God engage to remember this covenant, in connexion with remembering the land, unless the absolute promises of it extend to such an event?

A corresponding passage we have in Deuteronomy iv. 29, 30, 31. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even *in the latter days;* if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of the fathers which he sware unto thee." The same preparatory events are here supposed, and the same consequent good is secured. God will remember the covenant to fulfil it in every promise of it.—The 29th and 30th chapters of this book contain a republication of the same truths. The prediction has here however a fuller explanation, and one which goes much to confirm the doctrine of a restoration. See the 3d verse of the 30th chapter. "That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee, and will return, and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out into the outmost parts of heaven; from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God *will bring thee into the land* which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.—And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Here a restoration to the land is promised. It is promised conditionally indeed. Yet it

is evident the condition is to take place. As the condition is to take place, the words are equivalent with a prediction. They teach us, that the dispersed fugitives are all to be gathered in. They are to be planted in the land, and under circumstances of unparalleled glory. They are to be sanctified, from the least unto the greatest, so as to be sincerely, and most affectionately devoted to God.

The closing verse in the song of Moses, recorded in the 32d chapter, evidently refers to this event.—"Rejoice, O ye nations with *his people*, for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, *and will be merciful unto his land*, and to his people." The land is here distinctly mentioned as to be visited with mercy. This can imply nothing less, than that the proper heirs shall come into possession of it.

Let us next turn our eye to the closing verses of the following chapter. Here is the blessing with which Moses was inspired to bless Israel before his decease. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven for thine help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also the heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency. And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places." It may be said, these words refer to the conquest of Canaan, under the conduct of Joshua. No doubt they do in part. But it would be wholly contrary to the spirit of the covenant, and to the analogy of the scripture, to confine them to this event. The possession in which this conquest terminated, was but partial, interrupted, and temporary; nor is there any thing which has been experienced, which equals the

extent, and grandeur of the blessing conveyed in these words. Israel is now in a state of depression and seemingly forgotten. They have not been saved, aided, exalted, according to the plain import of these words. It will be noticed that the blessing has particular respect to the land which was given them by covenant.

In the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, from the beginning of the tenth verse, and on, is the following prediction. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. (Christ is here certainly in view; and, from parallel places it is undeniable, that by *his rest*, Israel is intended.) And it shall come to pass, that in that day the Lord shall set his hand again *the second time*, (the return from the Babylonian captivity was the first) to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Isles of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth.—And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry shod. And there shall be a high way for the remnant of his people, who shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt." No one can pretend that this prediction has had a fulfilment. It is yet to be executed; and its execution must involve a restoration of the dispersed descendants of Abraham to the land of promise. The 23d verse of the 24th chapter of this prophet, if it be compared with the preceding context, and interpreted according to the analogy of scripture, will appear to be strongly in favor of this idea. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign

in Mount Zion, and *in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously,*" See also the 33d chapter 20th verse. "Look upon Sion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." It is indisputable that this prediction has not yet been fulfilled. The ruin under which Jerusalem lies, is a proof that it refers to a period yet future. Its accomplishment must necessarily involve a restoration to the land. *Ib. li. 11.* "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrowing and mourning shall flee away." Though it is probable this passage has ultimate respect to the blessedness of heaven; the context shews, that it relates immediately to Israel, and a redemption which is to take place in this world. It secures a literal return to, and a triumphant, final repossession of Zion. To the same purpose is a passage in the 60th chapter, beginning at the 9th verse. The Gospel day is here plainly in view. "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, *to bring thy sons from far:*——And the sons of the stranger shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee.——The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee; the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.——Whereas, thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, (Israel is here represented undeniably as occupying a particular territory) I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations.——Violence shall no more be heard in *thy land,* wasting nor destruction within *thy borders;* but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.—— Thy people also shall be all righteous: *They shall inherit the land forever;* the branch of my planting;

the work of my hands that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time." This passage needs not to be commented upon. Let its terms, which have unquestionably a local reference, be duly considered. It will be perceived, that it has not yet been fulfilled, and that its fulfilment must be in a literal restoration. A similar string of promises we have in the 62d chapter. Israel is here distinguished from the Gentiles as the object of the blessing engaged. "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall *thy land* be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.——Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.——And they shall call themselves the holy people, *the redeemed of the Lord*; and thou shalt be called a city sought out, and *not forsaken*." Farther proof of a restoration we have in the prophecy of Jer. xxiii. 5. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice, and judgment in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness. Therefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the North country, and from all the Countries whither I have driven them, and *they shall dwell in their own land*." This prediction, as we are constrained to determine from the plain import of the words of it, was to be carried into effect in the days of the Messiah. But no events have taken place in which it can be considered as accomplished. It remains yet therefore to be fulfilled.

It will be proper here again to introduce a passage from this prophet, which for another purpose has already been quoted. Chapter 30. verses, 18, 19, 20. "Thus saith the Lord, behold I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded on her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; and I will also glorify them, and they shall not *be small. Their* children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established, and I will punish all that oppress them." It can hardly be doubted that this prophecy looks forward to a period yet future. If it does, it certainly proves a restoration yet to be accomplished.

We shall next produce two passages from Ezekiel, which clearly ascertain this desirable event. The first is in the xx. chap. beginning at the 41, verse. "I will accept you with your sweet savor when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the Countries whither you have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you *into the land of Israel*, into the country for which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways and your doings wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for all the evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God." The other passage is in the 37 chapter, beginning at the 21st verse. "And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and *bring them into their own land.* And I will make them one nation

in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols; nor with their detestable things, nor with their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned; and I will cleanse them, so they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.—And they shall dwell in the land which I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt. And they shall dwell therein, they and their children, and their children's children forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them forevermore." It cannot be pretended that these predictions have had their complete and ultimate accomplishment. The restoration from the Babylonian captivity, was an event much short of the plain import of this language. It was not attended with the reunion of the tribes; nor with such a general and final sanctification, as these promises engage to effect. By David, it is evident, the Messiah is intended; and that the scene of these eventful operations is laid in the Gospel day. In the fulfilment of these promises, the triumphs of grace are to be consummated.

The last verse of the 1st chapter of Hosea, presents farther corroborative proof of a restoration. This verse certainly describes an event which was to take place after the judicial dispersion of the unbelieving Jews. For the last clause of the preceding verse, is expressly

applied by Paul, as fulfilled in the ingathering of the Gentiles. "Then, (i. e. at some period subsequent to the ingathering of the Gentiles) shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

The prophecy of Amos closes with a similar prediction. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth seed, and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them; and *I will plant them upon their land;* and they shall no more be pulled out of their land, which I have given them, saith the Lord God." No doubt can exist that this passage looks forward to an event yet future.

There is another passage of the Old Testament, which is such a vivid description of the spiritual prosperity of Israel, in the day of restoration, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting it. It is the closing paragraph in the prophecy of Zephaniah. "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.—The Lord hath taken away thy judgments. He hath cast out thine enemy; the king of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, let not thy hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them

that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold at that time, I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and will gather her that was driven out; and I will get them fame and praise in every land, where they have been put to shame. At that time I will bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

Let us now attend to some evidence which the New Testament offers to this point. In the 23d chapter of of Matthew, 38th verse, our Lord, after making the solemn admonitory address to Jerusalem, which we find in the verse preceding, observes thus, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This undoubtedly expresses the desolation which took place soon after; and under which Jerusalem lies at the present moment. Why was it left desolate? Our Lord assigns the reason in the next verse. "For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Christ was the king and protector of Jerusalem. When he abandoned it, and gave it up to be wasted by his enemies, it was necessarily desolate; and it must be finally desolate, unless he shall appear to raise it from its ruins. But there is an express promise, in a quotation just made from Isaiah, that it shall not be finally termed *desolate;* and the passage now before us most evidently implies, that the desolation to which it is subject is but temporary, and that Christ will appear to remove it. "*Till* ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then they shall see him again. They shall welcome him with believing congratulation; and the desolation shall cease. In the 21st. chapter of Luke, 23d and 24th veses, we have these words, spoken by Christ. "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall

be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Certainly these words teach, that there will be a period put to this triumph of the Gentiles; that Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down by them; and of course, that it shall be raised gloriously from its ruins. But as the dispersing of the people among all nations, and the treading down of Jerusalem are synchronical events, they must cease together. A restoration is then to take place.

This is evidently the event which Peter has in view, in his address to his Jewish auditors, Acts, iii. 20, 21. "And he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive, *until the times of restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." The event of the reassumption of the land, and the reestablishment of Israel in it, as their proper inheritance, and in the enjoyment of all the spiritual blessings of a sanctified state, is undeniably the restitution, on which all the prophets have insisted from Moses to Malachi. This is the main subject of the consolations they administer, the delightful theme of their most animated descriptions. The heavens have received the Savior only for a time; or till the period when this restitution is to be effected shall arrive. The words then clearly imply, that a restoration will take place.

Let us now have recourse to the 11th chap. of Paul's Epistle to the Rom. a chapter which has furnished us much instruction on other parts of our subject. At the eleventh verse the Apostle asks, "I say then, Have they (the rejected part of Israel) stumbled, that they should fall? *Is their condition, as a part of the posterity of Abraham, hopeless? Is there to be no recovery, no reanimation of the lifeless branches? Is this apostacy final?* "God fordid." This reply is an emphatic negative. There will then be a reverse of the present state of this people. The Apostle adds in the next verse, "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the

diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, *how much more their fulness?* Here the same happy reverse is taught, as a certain future event. The same idea is communicated in the 15th verse. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, *What shall the receiving of them be*, but life from the dead?" This question evidently supposes the fact of their being eventually received; and in a manner which shall be the exact counterpart to their being cast away. Pursuing the figure of the olive tree, the Apostle says in the 24th verse, "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed into a good olive tree, How much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?" There is nothing problematical here. Nothing can be more certain than fact. Yet the Apostle here states, that as certain as is the fact of the ingathering of the Gentiles, so certain is the reinsertion of the natural branches. The residue of the chapter concurs in the proof of this point. But there is no need of pursuing the proof which it furnishes. Perhaps it will here be said, *that there will be an end to the blindness and unbelief of this people, and that they will gratefully embrace Jesus as the true Messiah, is conceded; but this may take place without their being restored to the land of Canaan; and there is nothing in this chapter, which assures us of this event; therefore it does not prove the thing for which it is produced.* To this it is replied; the reinsertion of these broken off branches into the good olive tree, can mean no less than their occupying the place which they held before they were broken off. Occupying this place, they necessarily partake of the fatness of the olive tree. This is the blessing; the entire blessing secured in the promise. But the land of Canaan is expressly a part of this blessing. Their being brought back then under the covenant, must necessarily restore them to the enjoyment of this land. Besides it is undeniable, that this event, which the apostle has his eye upon, is the scene which all the prophetic promises above quoted respect. A general

## CHAPTER XV.

*Containing several deductions, and addresses.*

THE preceding illustrations suggest several conclusions, which will here be noticed.

1. There is undeniable evidence in what has been exhibited, that the Old Testament is equally important with the New: and that concurrently, not separately, they constitute a revelation of the divine will to mankind.

The scripture, comprising both Testaments, is to be viewed, as a dispensation of God's one, eternal covenant, instituted for the redemption of sinners. In this light it lays before us one entire, harmonious scheme, which originates in the purpose of God, embraces the salvation of the whole church, progresses through ages, extends into eternity, and results in a good, worthy of unlimited benevolence. This scheme is superadded to the instructions of natural reason. It is utterly beyond the contrivance of human ingenuity.—The execution of it is altogether above human capacity. It has a character altogether the reverse of human attachments and pursuits. It is not calculated to subserve one purpose of selfishness, either personal or political. It is holy in its doctrines, its institutions, its means, and its effects. All its parts are in perfect agreement with each other. Though dispensed gradually, and by a considerable number of persons, from Adam to the time when inspiration ceased, and in divers manners, by types, symbols, and characters, it is throughout, connected and harmonious. The Old Testament and the New, exhibit this one scheme. They perfectly coincide with, and support each other. They not only coincide with each other, but with the whole

series of facts. The world is precisely in that moral state of apostacy and depravity, which this scheme supposes and expressly teaches. The church in fact rises, is perpetuated in that line, and by those means, and as a subject of those spiritual blessings, which the covenant holds out to view. It is distinguished from the world, is engaged in an unceasing warfare with it, is enlarged, caused to triumph, and proceeds on to its destined perfection, exactly as the scripture describes. The promise agrees with the purpose revealed, and is unfailingly executed. Jews and *Gentiles* are precisely in the situation which the scripture predicts. The blessing is extending farther and farther among the nations of the earth; and things are evidently in train, for the introduction of that splendid era, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established above the tops of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. It would therefore seem, that he who has just apprehensions of the scheme presented in the scripture, as one and entire; and is attentive to facts, as coincident with it, can no more question whether it be a revelation from God, than he can doubt whether the material world be the product of his power.

2. It is a conclusion in which the preceding illustrations result, that the faith of all the primitive saints under the Old Testament dispensation, through every period till Christ came, terminated upon the same thing, that the faith of christian believers terminates upon. The Savior had not indeed appeared. His personal glory, offices, and work, were indistinctly apprehended. The nature of his salvation was less clearly understood. The eternal joys of heaven, and the insupportable miseries of hell, were not impressively described. Still the promise of an eternal inheritance, which is the essence of God's new, and everlasting covenant, is the thing on which faith has ever relied. This promise is unalterable. It is the same to one, that it is to another. It is of the same gracious character. It secures the same spiritual and intermin-

able blessings. It secures the same obedience in every one who is a subject of it, and is a fruit of the same sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit. The primitive saints looked forward to him who is eminently the seed, as to come. Saints in the Gospel day look back to him, as having come.

It is the opinion of some, that life and immortality are so brought to light by the Gospel, and that the Gospel is so confined to that dispensation which followed Christ's appearing in the flesh, that eternal retributions were scarcely in the view of those eminent worthies who preceded Christ. An eminent writer has published four elaborate volumes, in defence of christianity, the scheme of which is built upon the principle, that a future and eternal existence is not a doctrine of the Old Testament. But if the covenant is one, and everlasting; if the promises of it have one uniform meaning; if they respect the same good, in kind, in degree, and in duration, as has been largely proved; then the faith of good men had precisely the same object under the former, that it has under the latter dispensation.

3. From the theory of the covenant which has been presented, we are naturally led to consider the church as wholly an effect of divine contrivance, and of divine power. God is exclusively the builder of it. The covenant upon which it is founded was settled in eternity. The terms, the means, the subjects, and issue, were unalterably fixed by him. No one assisted him originally by counsel; nor does any one cooperate with him in aid to the execution of his design. In effectuating this darling object he is alone. The world lieth in wickedness, and are opposed to the salvation proffered.—When Jesus comes to execute the promises of the covenant he comes to those who are lost. When he receives gifts for men, he receives them for the rebellious. Those who are saved are made subjects of a special, irresistible influence, which enlightens, renews, and sanctifies them; which keeps them from the evil that is in the world, causes them to triumph over all op-

Her God is in the midst of her; how can she be moved? His veracity is pledged, and it will be glorified. The latter end will no doubt be altogether better than the beginning. The christian asks for nothing but the promise of God. This we have. Let us then say with the Prophet. We have strong a city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Let us dismiss our distrust. Surely virtue will triumph. The church will stand forever; and Jesus, her Redeemer, will be endlessly exalted.

5. The preceding view of the plan of the covenant, and of the church, as rising upon it, as its basis, suggests the greatest possible encouragement to prayer, to personal sacrifices, and labors, to missionary establishments and efforts, and to pastoral zeal, in behalf of the interests of pure and undefiled religion. It is as far as possible from being a vain thing to pray to God, with humble and believing prayer. Prayer coincides with the nature of God's covenant. It results from feelings like his own. It is an espousal of his cause. It is required by him, as preparatory to the fulfilment of several at least, of his promises respecting the church. Ezekiel xxxvi. 37. "Thus saith the Lord God, I will for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Isaiah lxii. 6. "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Prayer is a covenant mean, connected, by a gracious constitution, with the end. The promises of the covenant, which are all yea and amen in Christ, secure its efficacy. It is the inviting language of God to his church, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it. He who asketh, receiveth, he who seeketh findeth, and to him who knocketh, it shall be opened." Personal sacrifices, and labors, for religion's sake, are never lost. They belong to the system of means to which the absolute promise of God has secured a certain and most glorious effect. He who takes patiently the spoiling of his goods for Christ's sake, exchanges a portion of very inconsiderable value, for the

infinitely better inheritance of eternal glory. He who suffers with Christ shall reign with him. He who labors, may know that his labor is not in vain in the Lord. The people of God can sustain no real loss. They inherit by covenant *the blessing*.

Missionary efforts coincide with the gracious purpose of God, and are essential to the execution of it. They must be made. They will be multiplied, in an unparalleled degree, when God, in the building up of Zion, appears in his glory. Their effects are infinitely happy; just the reverse of the *reign of sin*. When the Gospel is planted, in a part of the world, hitherto lying in the region and shadow of death, the blessing received, it is to be expected, will have a permanent footing.—It will be transmitted from generation to generation, in a seed, perpetually remaining, to serve the Lord.

6. From what has been exhibited to illustrate and establish the foregoing theory, we may fairly conclude, that every scheme of doctrine relative to the salvation of men, which makes the promises of the covenant altogether conditional, and suspends the execution of them, upon the contingence of consent and obedience, in man, is fundamentally erroneous. Such schemes there are, wrought into different forms, and rendered the more seductive, as they have an intermixture of truth, and are ostensibly directed to the promotion of virtue, and piety among mankind. Such schemes deny the eternal purpose of God, as the sole antecedent cause of the salvation of sinners. They deny the new covenant, in its origin, its principles, its spirit, and its effects; the grace which forms its character, the special agency with which it is carried into execution, and the sovereignty, by which it distinguishes some from others, as objects of the blessing. They destroy the harmony of the scripture, and remove entirely the basis of hope. They indeed make the salvation of the church altogether an impossibility.

7. It is a conclusion which obviously and undeniably follows from the preceding illustrations, that to extend baptism to any other adults than visible believ-

ers, or to any other children than the offspring or households of visible believers, is entirely unwarranted. In some churches, what is called the halfway covenant, a covenant distinct from the one which the communicants receive, is in use, and administered to persons who do not mean to be understood, and who in fact are not understood, as properly professing christianity, or as uniting themselves with the church of Christ. This is done for the sake of allowing them the privilege of having baptism for their children. This practice has nothing to countenance it in the scripture. It is wholly opposed to the simplicity of the covenant, and is an entire misapplication of the seal of it. It has been proved that the covenant which dispenses the blessing, and on which the church is built, is *one*. Any other covenant, superadded to this, must be a mere human invention, It cannot meet the approbation of God, nor can the observance of it contribute, in the smallest degree, to interest either parent or child in the divine favor. Baptisms administered under such a covenant, are an abuse of the authority of God, and in their nature void. Some churches admit, and some ministers practice, a large, and indiscriminate baptism, without respect to a religious profession of any kind. Such an indiscriminate baptism is, if possible, a still more blamable pervertion of the ordinance, and never ought to be recognized as christian.

8. It seems to be a necessary conclusion from what has been exhibited, that antipœdobaptism is an error, which contravenes the authority of God, and is of very pernicious tendency. Antipœdobaptism denies the covenant of God, in respect to some of the most prominent features of it, and refuses to apply an instituted seal of it to the subjects, to whom God has very clearly directed that it should be applied. It fastens a meaning upon the promises of the covenant altogether different from that which they really convey. It denies the descent of the blessing as secured in the covenant, and naturally leads to a disuse of the means which it has provided, as channels, in which this blessing is to go

down, from parent to child, and from generation to generation. It excludes the infant children of believers from that membership in the Church, which its constitution has secured to them. It casts them out into the uncovenanted world; and, to say the least, places them in a state of augmented danger with respect to their eternal salvation. It destroys the religious unity of the household state; deprives the pious parent of those consolations which the covenant provides for him; and leads inevitably to great self contradiction in practice. It separates Abraham *from his seed*, breaks up the holy *family of God*, turns into disrespect, and sometimes loads with ridicule and sarcasm his holy ordinances; and disfigures, in a very awful manner, that beautiful system of truth, with which God has enriched us. All this certainly follows, if the preceding theory be correct. And whether it has not a full support in the scripture, the reader will judge. These conclusions against antipœdobaptism rest upon the undeniable truth of this theory. The piety of many of this persuasion is not called in question. The error, though great and pernicious, is not supposed to be incompatible with a Christian state; or an insuperable bar to Christian fellowship. While we are constrained to censure our brethren for their errors, for their Zeal in propagating their unscriptural opinions, at the expense of the harmony, and unity of the Church, and especially for those unfounded and profane reproaches, they, or many of them, circulate against the covenant of circumcision, the family of Abraham, the Church of Israel, and that part of the Church under the latter dispensation, which they are pleased to call unbaptized and antichristian, we still desire to treat them as brethren. And we do so, when we beg them seriously to consider, whether their peculiar sentiments, and practice, be not an evident and a very dangerous departure from the covenant.

Finally, if the evidence which has been produced in support of the foregoing theory be, in the reader's mind, conclusive, he will feel the impression, that the

antipœdobaptist Churches, are not alone in the fault, of criminally disregarding important duties of the covenant. He will be stricken with a conviction, that the pœdobaptist Churches generally, if not universally, are to a sad degree, inattentive to those duties which stand in immediate connexion with the profession they have made, and the infant baptism which they practice. The neglect of these duties has furnished the most plausible objection to infant baptism. The true principle upon which it rests, in the scripture scheme, i. e. the absolute promise of God respecting a seed, and their consequent membership in his kingdom, has been perhaps of late but little understood, and but partially received. Hence little more attention has been paid to these children than to the children of the uncovenanted world. They have been baptized, and then forgotten. Their baptism has not been understood to signify the same thing with respect to them, which it is supposed to signify with respect to adults when they are subjects of it; and they have of course been received into the church, as though they had no sort of previous connexion with it. The matter has lain in a good deal of darkness and uncertainty. Parents have done little; ministers have done little; and churches, as it were nothing, coinciding with the principle of their membership. Perhaps this is a primary reason why religion is in so low a state, and the church seems so much forsaken. Thus we proceed through forms and lax habits, and the institutions of God loose their meaning, and importance. If things are so, our churches are in a state of melancholy departure from the spirit, and the strict practice of christianity, on this head. It is infinitely important that they be acquainted with the truth, and that they be awakened to realizing views of their duty. It is important that a reformation be wrought. Ministers must take the lead. Churches must say, as the pious fathers of Israel said to Ezra: "Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee, we also will be with thee; be of good courage, and do it." Christian parents must embrace just views of the covenant, with respect to

their infant offspring, and go laboriously into the duties which it enjoins upon them. The author of this work has perhaps little reason to calculate that his feeble performance will contribute to so desirable an event. But it is his hope, and his prayer that it may. And with a fervent wish to be instrumental of it, he will take the liberty to close his work with addresses to Parents and Ministers. First, to christian Parents.

Beloved in the Lord, I am, in this address, to suppose you renewed persons, sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This being your *happy state*, the preceding theory *will perfectly* meet your feelings, as fathers and mothers. You will be led to admire the infinity of that grace, which has not only provided for *your* salvation, and indeed secured it by an inviolable promise; but has given you leave to entertain higher hopes, of the salvation of your children, and your children's children, than others are permited to form respecting theirs. You will be grateful, that you are warranted to hope, that the blessing bequeathed to you in the covenant, will be transmitted to distant generations in your posterity. You will be constrained to say, with the grateful king of Israel. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house, for a great while to come; aud, Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" Delightful must be the prospect of standing before your heavenly Father, at last, with a train of redeemed decendants, with this language upon your lips, "Behold, here am I, and the children which God hath graciously given me." Surely you will take the covenant to your bosom as an inestimable treasure.—You will not suffer it to be wrested from you, by any false and imposing constructions. You will not suffer yourselves to be deprived of the blessings it entails, by counter assertions, however bold or assuming. You will appreciate these blessings, as more precious, by far, than all the gold of Ophir. But you will perceive, that, as the covenant does not secure the salvation of all

the offspring of the people of God indiscriminately, the promises of it do not warrant such a confidence, as shall permit you to be prayerless and inactive. They are so dispensed as to be a most powerful guard against despondency on the one hand; and presumption on the other; either of which would be calculated to enfeeble your efforts. The seminal decent of the blessing, as a general principle, is the ground of your trust. How far it will extend you are left uninformed. You are assured, that it stands in connexion with faith in yourselves, with prayer, with exertion, with the punctual observance of the ordinances, and that train of means which the covenant has provided. Your children are brought into the kingdom of Christ, as correlates with you. They have had baptism administred to them as a seal of the covenant, and a testimony to their membership. By publicly devoting them to God in this holy ordinance, you have vowed to him, and pledged yourselves to your Christian brethren, that you would be faithful in training them up in the ways of strict religion. Here then are presented very serious questions with respect to your past fidelity; and the most powerful motives to secure your faithfulness for the time to come. What does a recollection of the past testify? Have your views, your feelings, and your treatment of your children, comported with the relative state into which they are brought? Have you considered well, and deeply realized, the worth of their souls? Have you laid to heart what Christ, our older brother, hath done and suffered for their salvation; and been duly solicitous that his work aud sufferings should be savingly applied to them? Have you made diligent use of believing prayer? Have you taken hold of the covenant by faith, and gone to God, from day to day, pleading the promises of it? Have you surrendered your children into his hands? Have you tenderly cherished them as *his* children, and watched for their souls as those who must give account? Have you labored to instil into their opening minds just apprehensions of God, of their fallen state, and of the way of salvation

through Jesus Christ? Have you set before them a holy example; put them in the way of the best means; and carefully secured them, to the utmost of your power, from error, irreligion, and vice? So far as conscience charges you with neglects, in regard to attention, prayer, and practice; so far as it tells you, that unbelief has influenced you, or that the world has deadened your feelings, be penitently humbled before God, for your disregard of covenant engagements, confess your guilt at his feet, and repair to his mercy in Jesus Christ for forgiveness. The good *man*, as fast as he is convinced of *his backslidings*, will have them healed. He will turn his feet from the pit towards which he verged, and make haste to keep God's statutes. Suffer yourselves then, beloved brethren, to be excited to renewed zeal. Awake to righteousness and sin not.—The night is far spent. The day is at hand. The moments are fleeting. The last particle of sand in your glass will soon fall. And the lives of your children are extremely uncertain. You and they *must* soon, and *may* within a short space indeed, be separated by death. When this separation shall take place, opportunity will be forever past. If you shall be found to have been wickedly neglectful of duty in respect to them, so the tree must lie, as it has fallen. There will be no reparation of the mighty mischief; no retrieving the unspeakable loss. On the other hand, if you act in character; if you are alive in the service of him to whom you have sworne to be obedient; if death shall find you diligently employed; if you can hear, when your account shall be given up, the soothing voice of an approving God; how rich will be your reward? If you can look on your children, as recipients of the blessing through the instrumentality of your labors, how cheerfully, and peacefully, will you leave them, or lay them in the dust, should they be called to die before you? How comforting the hope of seeing them again at the resurrection of the just? And what undescribable transports of joy will spring up in your hearts, upon meeting them at the right hand of

Christ, and entering in with them through the gates in, to the city ? You have had an imperfect account set before you of the encouragements which the covenant gives to fidelity. You would be obliged were there none; and now that they are so many, and so great, will you refuse to be moved ? Your children are brought into a dangerous world. Many snares are laid for their feet. They have enemies within, and enemies without. They are cast upon you by the parent of the universe, as their proper guardians and guides. You have a more easy and influential access to them, than any other of the servants of God can possibly have. They seem to be placed in your hands to be moulded, and formed at pleasure. Shall these talents, which are peculiar to yourselves, be buried in the dust ? Will you not avail yourselves of opportunity, and means, as far as you enjoy them ? How much is said in the laws of the government ; how much do we find in the writings of the wise ; how much do we hear from the tribunals of justice ; and how much are we instructed by the events of every day, in the lesson, of the importance of training up children in a suitable manner ? Religion is certainly the soul of education. He who is left ignorant of this, is left fatally ignorant. External accomplishments without a sanctified heart, are but the nutriment of pride, and do but prepare for a more awful destruction. Remember, my brethren, that the command of God is upon you. His direction to you is, " And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up.—Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Feed (says the Savior) my lambs." Will you disregard these express commands of your covenant God ? You must not. You have sworn to him, and must be faithful. You have openly separated yourselves from the world to be followers of the holy Jesus. You must

take up your cross and imitate his prayerful, self denying, and active example. Your houses must be houses of prayer, and religious improvement. Drink deep, dear brethren, into the excellent spirit of the Gospel. Be stimulated by the noble examples of active and persevering zeal, it presents to your view. Let love give its whole weight to your reproofs and counsels. Realize the presence of God, and your accountableness to him. Take your children by the hand, and lead them in the narrow path of righteousness and salvation. Let them have pious books; and especially see that they are much conversant with the holy scriptures. Take them to the sanctuary of God constantly, and engage your brethren to unite with you in the labor of forming them for heaven. May they stand, like olive plants, round about your tables. And may you meet them at last in the mansions of glory.

2. I will take leave to urge upon my fathers and brethren, in the ministry, the faithful discharge of the duties which are involved in the preceding theory. Some of them, it is hoped, will condescend to cast their eyes over these sheets. I know not, Respected and Beloved, how far you will be convinced that a just view is here given of the economy of the Church, and the nature of the covenants; but shall presume to take it for granted, that the great doctrine of the membership of the infant seed, is conclusively proved. If this be admitted, must we not be stricken at once with the conclusion that our practice falls very much short of those obligations which the covenant imposes? Are not the children of our Churches inexcusably neglected by the Churches themselves, and by us the pastors of them? We administer baptism to them. Is it always, is it generally done upon the true principle of the covenant? Do we take them into our bosoms according to that holy relation in which they stand to God, and his kingdom? Does our treatment of them correspond with the import of the baptism which we administer to them? Do we faithfully perform the duties of our priesthood, as it involves daily interces-

sion for these lambs of the flock? Are our public ministrations, as adapted as they ought to be, to keep alive the attention of the adult members of our Churches, to these objects of benevolent care? Are our sermons fraught with urgency; and carried home to the conscience, by the superadded influence of example? Do we instruct by frequent chatechetical lectures? Do we familiarly address these young candidates for eternity, as our office enjoins and opportunity admits? We charge our hearers with fault, if they do not apply to themselves, and become corrected by, the reproofs we offer. Let us practice what we inculcate. Let us stand selfcondemned so far as evidence pronounces us guilty. It must be obvious, respected brethren, that much, very much depends, under God, upon our faithfulness to the children of our Churches. They are the hopes of the Church. If it rises, it must be expected to rise in them, as subjects of grace. Through them the blessings of the covenant are to go down to distant ages. Less expectations are to be formed from the families which call not upon God's name. There may be a few conversions from among them. But they will be comparatively few. These families will be overrun with infidelity, impiety, and vice. The children of them will be trained up to neglect, and despise religion. Let us, as far as we have opportunity, preach the Gospel to every creature, and strive to save the souls of of all from death; but let us be particularly careful to follow the plan of the covenant, and the pointings of Providence. The fear is that we shall leave duty undone; that we shall have too little resolution, and too little zeal to engage spiritedly, and persevere without wavering, in those exertions which we are constrained to acknowledge to be enjoined upon us. If our Churches are reformed in discipline and practice, the reformation must begin in ourselves; and we must be active to lead them in the right way. Beyond all doubt, the adoption of the scheme of infant membership, if abused, if it is suffered to go on, without the faithful

use of means and discipline, will produce mischief. It will make Churches of mere formalists. This is equally true of adult membership, and of every thing pertaining to religion. Duty must be done in the spirit, and to the extent of it. Let us then yield to obligation. Let us determine that in all things we will follow the teachings of God's word. Let us not be disheartened by difficulties, real or apparent. Let us tread down opposition. Let us put on bowels of mercies; fight the good fight of faith; feed the sheep, and the lambs; and, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, we also shall appear *with him* in glory. May you have many souls given you, dear brethren, as seals of your ministry, and your crown of rejoicing forever.

AMEN.

# POSTSCRIPT.

TO prevent needless cavils, in regard to historic testimony, it is thought proper to observe here, that what is said in page 260, is not to be understood as asserting, that Dr. Gale pretends to bring evidence against infant baptism, from no other source than the letter of Polycrates. What is meant is, that he produces nothing which can properly be considered as of the nature of testimony, to contravene the explicit declarations of Cyprian, Austin, &c. It is admitted he attempts to make an argument out of a few passages in Justin Martyr, St. Barnabas, and Tertullian. The argument is of the same nature with that which is deduced by the Baptists from the scriptures, that faith is spoken of as preceding baptism. All these passages produced by Dr. Gale, apply to adults only. Infants are evidently not in view, one way or the other. The argument therefore is a mere sophism. It does not apply to the point in hand, and deserves not to be considered as of the nature of testimony. If there were a thousand more texts than there are in the Bible; and a thousand more passages in primitive ecclesiastical writers, which spoke of baptism as following a profession of faith, adults only being in view, they would suggest no evidence against infant baptism. Mr. Peter Edwards has taken this sort of argument entirely out of the Baptists' hands.

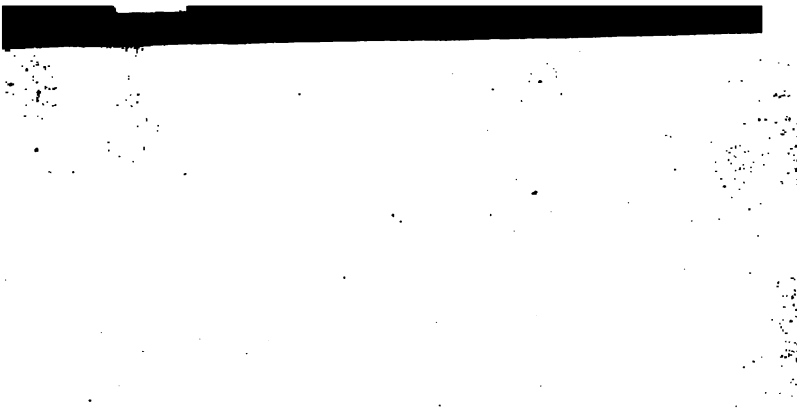
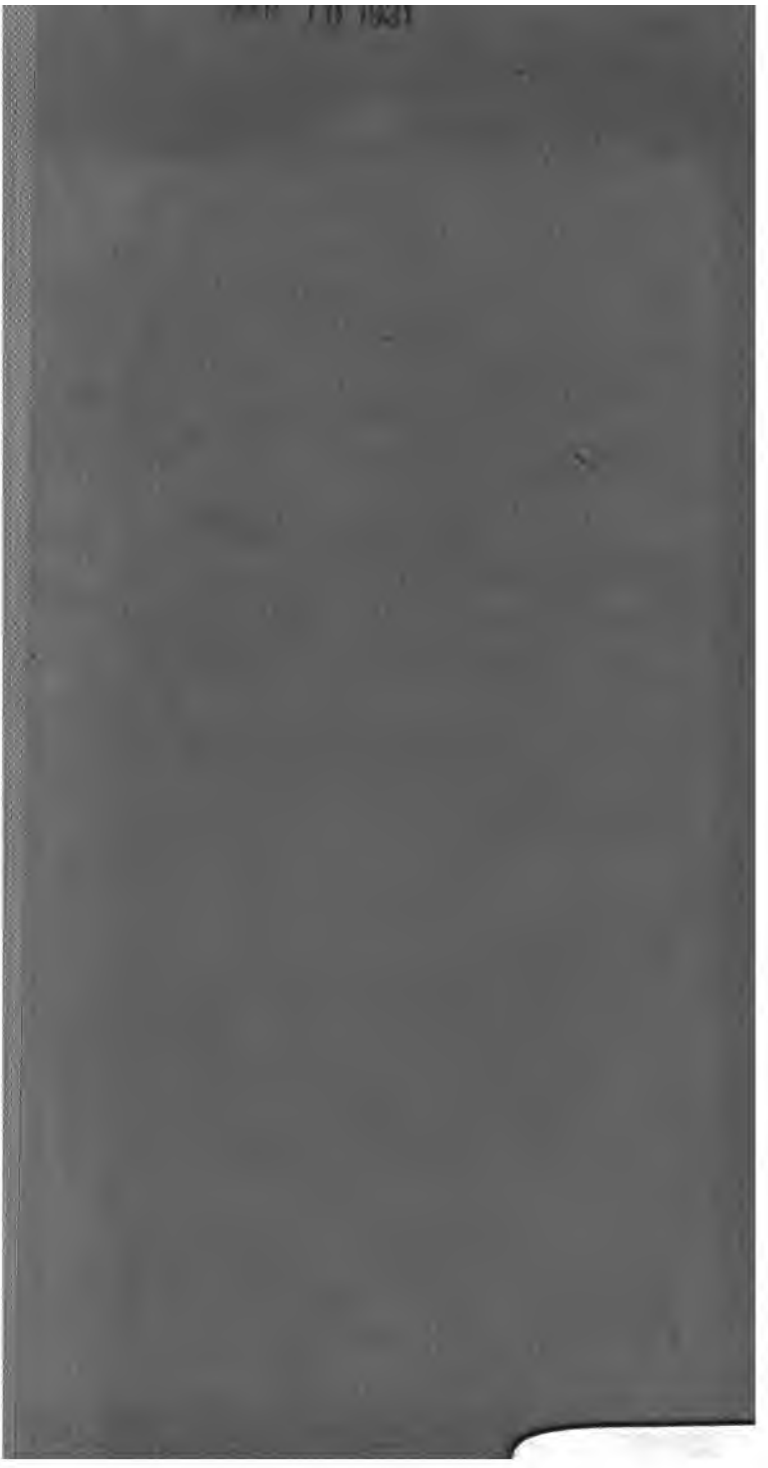
What I wish to be understood to say, is, that no passage is, or can be produced from the fathers, who were cotemporary with Austin, or before him, which asserts a negative; or denies, that infant baptism was received from the apostles. Let the passage be produced if it can be found. Let witness be opposed to witness, if it can be done. Our witnesses are Origen,

Celestius a Pelagian, the council of Carthage consisting of twenty Bishops, and Austin. The declarations of Austin are several, and express. They assert, that by the consent, and practice of the whole church, baptism was received as a tradition from the apostles.— They go directly to determine what was the pratice of the church in the first and purest ages. And of how much weight they are as evidence in this view, may be seen from the following concessions of Dr. Gale. Reflections, page 398. "I will grant, 'tis however probable, that what all or most of the churches practised, immediately after the apostles' *times*, had been appointed or practised by the apostles themselves, and was derived from them; for it is hardly to be imagined, that any considerable body of these ancient christians, and much less that the whole, or a great part of the church should so soon deviate from the customs and injunctions of their venerable founders, whose authority they held so sacred. And besides, new opinions or practices we see are usually introduced by degrees, and not at once, nor without opposition; therefore, in regard to baptism in particular, a thing of such universal concern, and daily practice, I allow it to be very probable that the primitive churches kept to the apostles pattern. But then I desire it may also be considered, that this, though ever so probable, cannot fairly be made equivalent with the authority of the scriptures; so that if it can be proved from the scriptures to be likewise so much as probable, that the apostles did not baptize infants (which I think I have already shewn*) that other probability, drawn from the writings of the fathers, ought not to be urged against us. However, I am to suppose (as indeed I verily believe) that the primitive church maintained, in this case, an exact conformity to the practice of the apostles, which doubtless entirely agreed with Christ's institution, and I might venture to put the whole matter upon this issue. Nay farther, since Mr. Wall is desirous to have it

* Which however he had not shewn, nor is it possible for any other man to shew.

thought *impossible* the church should so early be ignorant of, or vary from the practice of the apostles in so notorious an affair, as that of baptism, I will for once grant him that too; so that now the whole question is reduced to this, whether it can be proved from authentic pieces of the primitive fathers, that the church used infant baptism in those earliest times?" Here the question, so far as relates to historic evidence, is fairly brought before us. Let witnesses decide it. That there may be no debate respecting authentic pieces, we, on our part, will yield so far as to dispense with the testimony of Origen; because it is objected that it comes to us only by a bad translation of Ruffnus. Let equally explicit testimony be produced against infant baptism, as our other witnesses offer for it; and let traditionary practice from age to age, to the present day, be shewn to declare as fully against, as we have shewn that it does for it, and we will give up the argument from history.

A friend who has obliged me by reviewing the foregoing sheets, has suggested the probability that some of the persons mentioned in page 167, as native Jews, were Proselytes. The probability I do not refuse to admit. But the reader will perceive, that even if this could be proved, it would not in the least enfeeble the argument.

The same friend has suggested, that I shall be liable to be misapprehended in what is said at the top of page 174. An objection here, however, I think can result from nothing but a disposition to cavil. To preclude cavilling, I observe, that I do not mean that the vine and the olive tree are parallel figures, as representing precisely the same thing; but in regard to unity of object, and the principle upon which they are to be explained. I had rejected Dr. Baldwin's construction, that the olive tree was designed to represent Christ, personally and separately considered. The reader will not understand me, as here conceding what had been before rejected.

Another friend, after going over the work, has made the following remark in a letter. "That Christ will appear on the earth at the commencement of the Millennium, is what I very much doubt." This observation leads me to suspect that my readers will, from some passage, take that to be my belief. This is not exactly the idea I have meant to convey. That Christ will, according to the opinion of the ancient Millenarians, hold a personal reign on earth, I do not as yet discover any decisive proof. But that *what the scripture* intends by his appearing, or second coming, will take place about the time that the Millenaium shall commence, is I think plainly a doctrine of scripture. Perhaps such evidence might be produced in favor of this hypothesis, as a candid mind would deem conclusive.